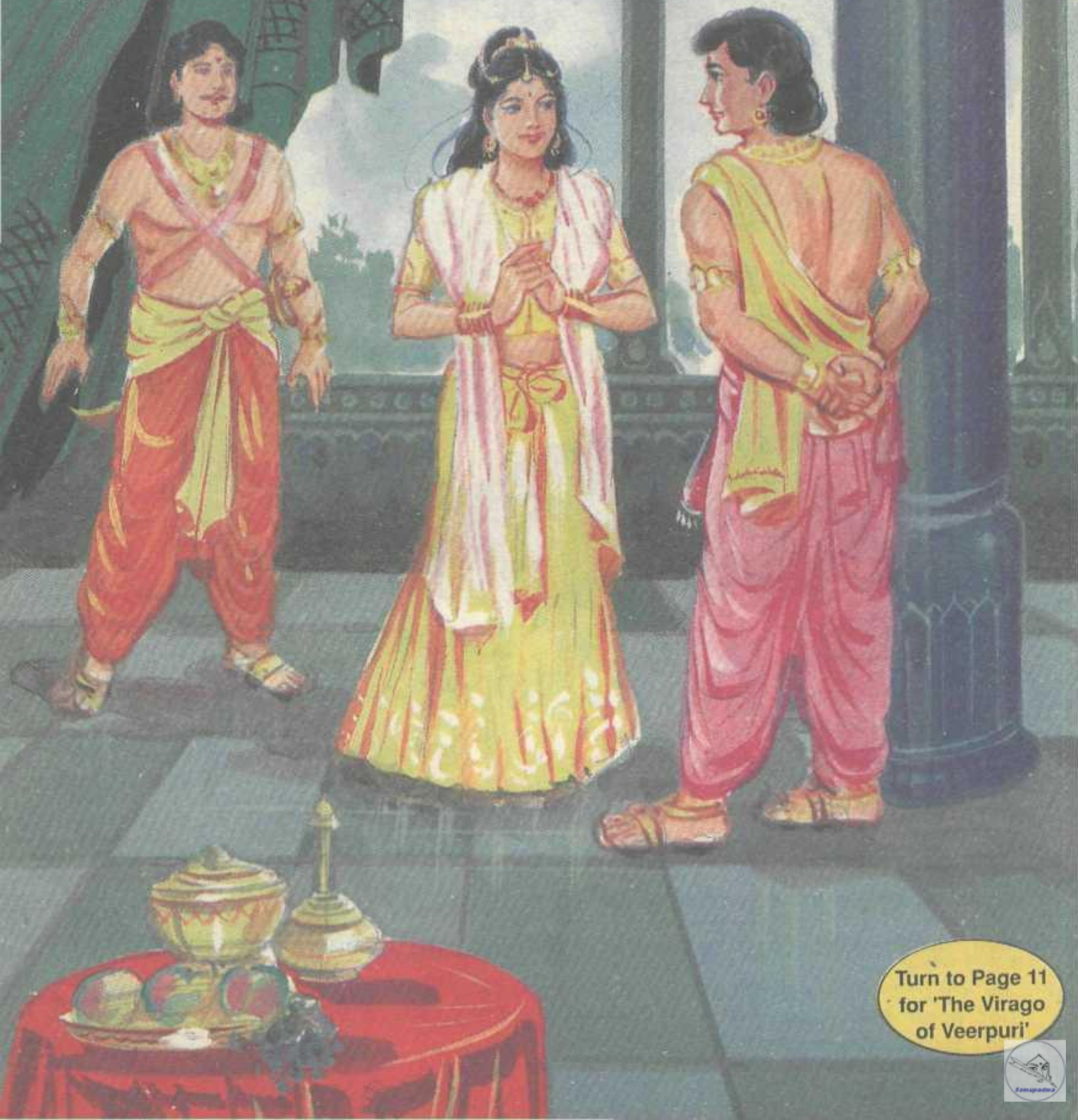


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Vol.28 April 1998 No.10

The Saga of 1857: Rani of Jhansi's fort falls to the British. But where is she? Until the enemy gets her - dead or alive - it cannot rest in peace. And the Rani is not going to give them peace! **Mahabharata:** Now that Lord Krishna has allayed the fears of Arjuna and cleared his doubts, he blows the conch to announce the beginning of the war. Bhima pounces on the Kaurava armies. Bhishma drives his chariot through the Pandava ranks, and Abhimanyu races to the centre to meet the challenge. Bhishma retreats and charges at young Swetha, who demolishes his chariot. Climbing on to another chariot, Bhishma aims an arrow at Swetha and takes his life. While the Kaurava camp rejoices, there is gloom in the Pandava camp.

The Virago of Veerpuri: Bhanupriya, the elder daughter of Prime Minister Bodheshwar, has a meeting with Vijaykrishna, son of the late army commander, Marthandvarma, when she takes him into confidence and expresses her doubt about Princess Vairamukhi. She tells him how she happened to see some birth-marks on the princess's shoulders. She remembers having seen similar marks on his missing sister Vajreshwari. If the real Vajreshwari is impersonating a princess, what could be her motive? Vijaykrishna has not much time to pursue the suspicion created in his mind. He shares his thoughts with Prince Veersen in whose palace Vairamukhi is a royal guest. The princess is goaded into rushing through the mission given to her. What is it?

They stood up to the British: The 4-page comics tells the story of Rani Chennamma of Kittoor.

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Controlling Editor: NAGI REDDI

THE LAST ARCHER IN THE FOREST

The Golden Jubilee of our Independence reminds us of so many wonderful events of the bygone times. You have already read about the Santhal Mutiny—how the children of the forests and hills fought the East India Company with a strange combination of courage and innocence. Here is the record of the character of one such fighter.

One day, while approaching a tribal village, the British army met with a swarm of arrows. They came from one single house. The soldiers surrounded the house and made holes on the wall and poured bullets through them. Their captain called upon the inmates to surrender. But, in answer, fresh waves of arrows were showered on them. This went on for a long time. But the number of arrows were becoming few and fewer. At last came only one arrow. The soldiers fired their guns again.

Thereafter no arrow came. The soldiers broke open the door and entered the house. Inside stood one old man amidst corpses. It was he who had sent the last arrow. "Surrender!" shouted the captain, as he stepped forward to capture the old man whose right arm had been struck by so many bullets. But, suddenly flashed a sword and the captain's head rolled on the ground. The old man's left hand was still active, after all!

A dozen guns boomed. The old man lay sprawled on the other dead bodies. That was almost the end of the Santhal Mutiny.

One of the army captains records that there was not a single soldier who did not feel ashamed of fighting these naive, heroic, and almost unarmed Santhals.

Loan and Luck, but no connection

Parmanand of Shivapuri wanted some money urgently to conduct his daughter's wedding. He went to Vijayraghavan, who was a moneylender of the place. But he excused himself and Parmanand had to go away empty-handed.

The Zamindar of Anandpuri was at that time looking for an assistant. He received many applications, out of which he selected two and was wondering who he should call for an interview. One of the two was Vijayraghavan's son.

Parmanand somehow came to know of this and decided to make use of the information. He approached Vijayraghavan once again. "I know the Zamindar of Anandpuri and his dewan. I hear your son has applied for the job of assistant to the Zamindar. The dewan and I had studied in school together. I don't mind putting in a word to him on behalf of your son. You may please give me the loan I had earlier asked for; of course, I shall repay the sum with interest."

Vijayraghavan gladly gave him the loan. Before a week had passed, his son got the job with the Zamindar. Parmanand's wife pulled him up. "You never told me that you know the dewan of Anandpuri!"

"Who said I know the dewan?" said Parmanand with a mischievous smile. "That was only a ruse I employed to get a loan from Vijayraghavan. He gave me the money and Luck favoured his son. That's all!"





THE VIRAGO OF VEERPURI

The story so far: Having accomplished two assignments given to her by 'Raja' of Mahendragiri, Princess Vairamukhi continues to stay in Veerpuri as a royal guest so that she can fulfil her third and equally diabolic mission for him. She is drawn towards Prince Veersen, though Raja has warned her that she will never become the prince's bride. The question, who or what she will then be does not bother her for the time being. At the instance of Raja, she gets closer to him. She learns to play Shatranj—the prince's favourite pastime, which he indulges in while in the company of Prime Minister Bodheshwar's younger daughter Bhanumati. Her sister, Bhanupriya, gets suspicious of Vairamukhi. Is she really a princess? Isn't she Vajreshwari, the daughter of the late army commander Marthandvarma, who used to be their playmate when they were all children? Bhanupriya is anxious to confide in Prince Veersen, but she decides to wait for an opportune moment to warn him.

While Bhanumati was escorting Princess Vairamukhi to her palanquin, her sister followed them a little distance away, but soon went back, not to the hall where they were entertaining the princess the whole day, but to the seclusion of their private apartments in the Prime Minister's

residence. She wanted some quietude before she could take a decision—should she or should she not confide in Prince Veersen and tell him that the royal guest in his palace might not be any princess but somebody assuming such a status. Suppose he were to turn round and ask her, who then the princess



was, what reply would she give him? Just like her, he too might have noticed her resemblance to Vajreshwari, the missing daughter of Marthandvarma. She thought, it was rather strange that the prince never mentioned it to them whenever he spoke to the sisters about Princess Vairamukhi, for whom his mother, Queen Suryaprabha, had taken a special liking.

But, now that a doubt about the princess's real identity had arisen in her after she had noticed the familiar mole on her shoulders, Bhanupriya had first to convince herself that Vairamukhi was Vajreshwari, and it would then be her duty to warn Prince Veersen at an appropriate time, but sooner than later.

Meanwhile, Bhanumati realised that her sister was not at the portico to see off Princess Vairamukhi. After the palanquin had disappeared from her sight, she hurried to the hall expecting Bhanupriya to be still there. No, she was not in the hall. She searched her out in their room and found her seated next to the window overlooking the garden and in a contemplative mood.

"Priya! What's the matter?" queried Bhanumati anxiously. "Why didn't you come to see off the princess?"

"Was she asking for me?" responded Bhanupriya, without giving a direct answer to her sister's question.

"No, but she was looking for you," said Bhanumati. "She might have thought that you were behind me. She said she would come again if the prince permitted her. But he won't have any objection if we both called on her at the palace, will he?"

"Of course, not!" Bhanupriya hurried through a reply. "We'll ask him when he comes here tomorrow." She had by then decided that she would seek more opportunities to confirm her doubt—the presence of the mole on Vairamukhi's shoulder—before she divulged it to her sister or the prince. And, for that, she must meet the princess as many times as possible and she must catch her unawares.

The next day, Princess Vairamukhi was expecting a visit by Prince Veersen after she had returned from her early morning visit to the temple.

Though there was no message from the prince, she had a surprise gift from him. It was a *shatranj* set beautifully carved in ivory.

"The prince has sent this for you, princess," said the maid, placing it on a nearby table.

"Is there any message for me?" queried Vairamukhi.

"No, princess," replied the girl, before bowing to her and leaving the room.

Vairamukhi took one piece after another and the dice, admiring the craftsmanship. She then recollected the instructions given to her by Bhanumati how to play the game. While she was playfully throwing the dice on the board with one hand, and sometimes with both, trying to find out which was more effective, Ragini came in and told her that the prince was approaching the room and he was not alone. Before she could ask who the stranger was, Veersen and another young man came up to the door and halted for a moment as if they awaited her permission to enter.

"Please remain seated, princess," said Veersen, when he came in. "I've brought someone to meet you, Vairamukhi. He's my childhood friend, Vijaykrishna. His father was our army commander, Marthandvarma, who was my mother the queen's brother. Vijay has been keeping company with my father, the King, during his inspection of the frontiers. He arrived yesterday



for some important discussion with me, and he'll go back tomorrow. Perhaps he'll be away when you decide to return to Mahendragiri. That's why I wanted him to meet you today."

Vairamukhi smiled at him. And she looked around for seats for the two. There was only one chair in front of her. "Veer, you sit down; I do not mind standing up for some time," said Vijaykrishna casually, all the while looking at the princess. He thought he had seen Vairamukhi earlier. But where? He could not easily remember at that moment. In fact, he did not waste any time to remember it, because he heard the prince mentioning his name.

Veersen was saying: "It was





Vijaykrishna who taught me to play *shatranj*. By the way, did you like the set I sent you, Vairamukhi?"

"It is beautiful, prince! What exquisite craftsmanship!" she observed. "From where did you get it?"

"It came as one of the wedding gifts my father received from Saptagiri, from King Rudrapratap. My mother was the princess of Saptagiri," Veersen explained. "But my father had no time to play the game regularly, and the set was lying around. Vijay had learnt the game from his father, the army commander, and when he taught me to play, I pulled out the set. On some days, my mother would play with me. She, too, loved the game."

"I would love to watch you both

play—here," pleaded Vairamukhi, "if you have some free time."

"That's the problem, princess," said the prince, apologetically. "As Vijay has to leave early tomorrow, we will be busy the whole day with the Prime Minister. I hope to get some time tomorrow and I shall join you then. When I go to Bodheswar's residence, I shall ask Bhanupriya and Bhanumati to come here and spend some time with you. What do you say?"

"Oh! I would really welcome a visit from them, prince," remarked Vairamukhi, putting out a wide smile. "Please tell them how eagerly I look forward to meeting them."

"Perhaps, on my next visit to the palace", said Vijaykrishna, "I shall have an opportunity to play *shatranj* with you, Princess Vairamukhi. That is, if you are still here." He then took leave of her and followed Prince Veersen, who was already going out of the room.

Soon, the arrival of the two sisters was announced. Princess Vairamukhi received them with warmth.

"Did you meet the prince and his friend?" asked Vairamukhi.

"No," replied Bhanupriya. "Our father conveyed the message from the prince that you were awaiting our visit."

"Did you say, 'friend'?" queried Bhanumati. "Vijaykrishna and the prince are cousins—sons of a brother and sister."

The conversation then centred

round Vijaykrishna and his missing sister, Vajreshwari, who had disappeared while the two were hunting, and how a wide search was made to trace her and how the search did not yield any result. Bhanupriya was all the while trying to watch the princess's reaction. She did not get any indication from her face. It looked as if the mention of the name Vajreshwari did not create any impact on Vairamukhi. Yet, Bhanupriya wanted to believe that Vajreshwari and Vairamukhi have some connection with each other. However, what surprised her was that today the princess was dressed in such a way that she would not get an opportunity to see the mole on her shoulder which had prompted her to doubt whether Vairamukhi was not really Vajreshwari. Once or twice,

she tried to draw the princess into speaking about Mahendragiri and found that she was evading any direct reply. This only grew her suspicion about Vairamukhi—whether she was a princess at all or an imposter.

The sisters spent a few hours in the company of Vairamukhi, playing *shatranj* and roaming in the royal garden. They then took leave of the princess, who saw them off at the door of her apartments, because they were being escorted by the maids, Shalini and Malini.

Princess Vairamukhi hurriedly got ready to go to the Kali temple, as usual accompanied by the late Queen's maids and Ragini. As was her practice, Vairamukhi, after her worship at the temple, repaired to the banyan tree and sat there alone, wondering



whether she would receive any message from Raja, as he had not "spoken" to her for several days now.

Soon after Ragini and the maids had moved away for their private chit-chat, Vairamukhi heard Raja's voice clearl: "We cannot delay the final act. Vijaykrishna will go back to King Soorasen tomorrow morning. Both of them will thus be away from the kingdom. The prince will be alone in his royal apartments. At the stroke of eleven, you come out of your room and take the passage on your left. My men will be waiting for you. They will show you the way to the prince's chambers, and wait at a distance to escort you back to your room. You'll find a dagger among your clothes, tomorrow. Take it with you. Don't engage the prince in any conversation. After the deed is done, he will have some moments of life left in him. Tell him then that Raja of Mahendragiri had had his revenge. Remember, you have to return to your

room before midnight. Remain in the palace for three days. On the fourth day, my men will meet you and help you to leave Veerpuri. You will not hear from me again. We meet again in Mahendragiri when I shall decide about your reward and future. I'll make you a real princess. Be brave. Take care at every step. No harm will come to you, Vairamukhi!"

The voice trailed off, as suddenly as it was heard. By then Vairamukhi was shaking all over. How could she kill Prince Veersen when he had done no harm to her? But she had to obey the command of Raja. Why did he want to take revenge on the prince?

Before she could spend more time in putting other questions to herself and trying to answer them herself, Ragini came up to her and reminded her that it was time to go. Would there be another visit to the Kali temple? wondered Princess Vairamukhi as she followed Shalini and Malini, with Ragini walking behind her.

-To conclude



Indian author wins Booker Prize

The God of Small Things by Arundhati Roy does not come under the category of "children's literature", but we take note of the book because it has won the coveted Booker Prize for the best novel published in nearly 50 Commonwealth countries, including England and Ireland, in 1997, and also because it is the first ever novel written by the author.

First, meet Arundhati. She was born 37 years ago into the family known as Puliampallil in the now famous Ayamanam village in Kottayam district, Kerala. The river Meenachil flows through the village. Her grandfather, John Kurien, was an engineer in government service. After retirement, he entered church service and became a priest. The Reverend Father Kurien was a popular figure, because he did not discriminate between the rich and the poor, and gave freedom to the children in his own family to mingle and play with their counterparts from other families not enjoying equal affluence and those from what are usually described as backward classes. He also established a school for all these children and built a church for the villagers to come and pray. The British Government honoured him with the title—Rao Bahadur. Arundhati's father was a planter in Shillong, where she was born. She had her early schooling in Ayamanam.

Arundhati, even when she was a child, had a love for Nature. Kerala, which is popularly described as 'God's own country', is famous for its scenic beauty, and village Ayamanam was no exception. The surroundings of her house had a lot of attraction for Arundhati. After her scholastic career, she took up architecture for her studies. However, later in life, she

decided that she was not cut for a career of designing buildings and bridges.

She had a great urge for writing, and she now tried her hand at writing scripts for movies. One script was made into a movie—*Massey Sahib*—and it was a hit. Two more of her scripts were also made into movies, though they created much controversy. Arundhati played major roles in all the three movies.

She then stopped writing film scripts. By then she had already thought of the plot for a novel, which she took nearly five years to complete. Her mother Mary Roy recalls that even while studying in the primary classes, her teachers had found it difficult to cope with her "appetite for reading and writing... She was a born writer... Years later I gave her a typewriter as a birthday gift. She made good use of it, though subsequently she went in for a desk top computer on which she 'keyed in' *The God of Small things*."

Now, a word about the novel, the story of which revolves round twins—a boy and a girl—and the family and society in which they live and grow up from age seven. The location, of course, is Ayemenem (as spelt in the book), and naturally many of her characters are people who mattered in her own life. According to one leading novelist of Kerala, Arundhati "has captured the beauty of village life in Kerala". Mother Mary Roy says, Arundhati's description of the landscape sticks to whatever she had observed in Ayamanam, and that she did not bring in anything that cannot be seen or does not exist in her village. The 'geography' of the location is perfect, she asserts. The period of the novel is the Sixties.



Arundhati showed the manuscript to some agents of publishers in England, and they were so taken up by the story that they vied with each other to secure the publishing rights. HarpersCollins offered the best price (Rs. 3 crores), and the book was published in April last year. By the time it was nominated for the Booker Prize, some 35,000 copies had been sold all over the world, and also translated into nearly 15 foreign languages. It is now being rendered into 20 more languages.

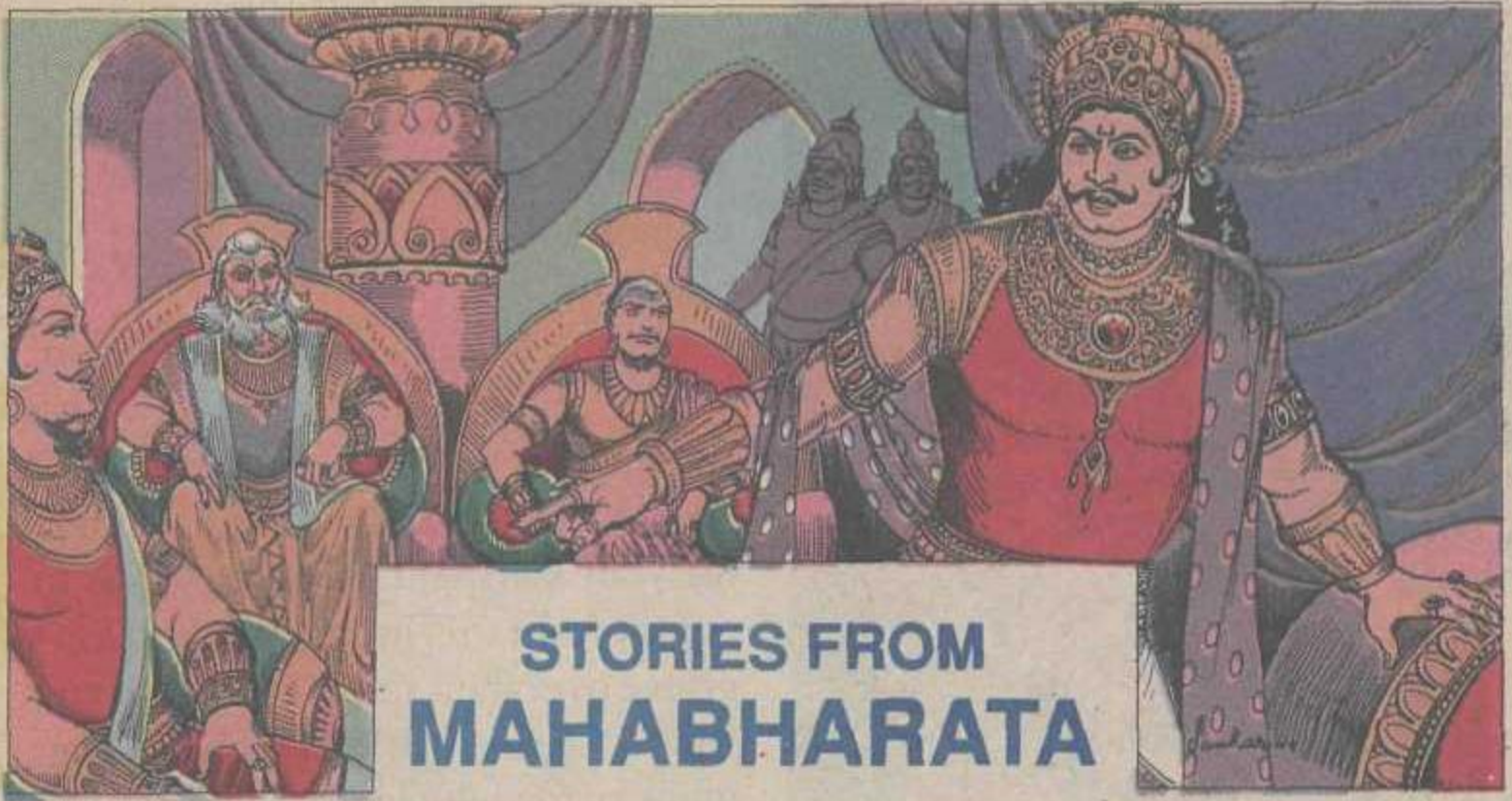
The God of Small Things was one of the 106 novels published in the Commonwealth last year that were considered for the Prize. This was shortlisted, and Arundhati's was among the six that were nominated. The five member panel was unanimous in their choice. The

£25,000 (Rs. 12.5 lakhs) award was announced on October 14.

Arundhati Roy is the fourth Indian writer to win the Booker Prize since its inception 25 years ago. The prize is awarded by the Booker Company—a well-known publisher. The earlier winners were Salman Rushdie (1987) for *Midnight's Children*, Ruth Praver Jhabwala (1975) for *Heat and Dust*, and V.S. Naipaul (1971) for *In a Free State*. All of them are of Indian descent. They were, by the time they won the award, already established writers, while Arundhati Roy had no such literary background. Anyway, she has done India proud.

When she was asked to comment on the award given to her, Arundhati is reported to have remarked: "It is not the best book; it is the luckier book."





STORIES FROM MAHABHARATA

The story so far: When Duryodhana asks him why he refuses to fight against Sikhandi, Bhishma, relates the story of Amba, later born as Sikhandi, who is destined to be the instrument of his death, And Duryodhana is reconciled to the fact that the patriarch would not fight against that 'one man', Sikhandi. Then...

On the eve of the great battle, Duryodhana called all his renowned warriors to his tent and addressed them :

"How long will it take you to destroy the Pandava armies ?" he queried.

Bhishma replied that it would take him thirty days to accomplish the task. Drona answered that he too would take thirty days in order to rout the Pandavas totally. Kripa was more cautious. He gave two months as his estimate.

Aswathama announced that he would bring about the destruction of

the Pandavas in just ten days. Karna boasted that he would demolish the Pandava's might in just five days. All this gladdened Duryodhana's heart. He was sure that with such redoubtable warriors on his side, ultimate victory would be his.

He smiled triumphantly at Karna. Correctly interpreting that look, Bhishma said: "Karna can only boast what he can do. He can hardly achieve that in real action."

Meanwhile spies carried the news of these speculations to Yudhishtira. He asked Arjuna: "How long will it take you to destroy the Kaurava armies ?"

40. ON THE EVE OF THE GREAT BATTLE



Arjuna replied: "How can we fix a deadline for this battle? If our warriors set their minds to it, we can destroy our enemies in no time. I possess the divine Pasupata weapon. Neither Bhishma nor Drona, neither Kripa nor Karna, has the like of it. But it will not be right to use it on ordinary soldiers. Many of our great warriors possess such powerful weapons in their arsenal. Above all, the determination to fight and win is intense in them. Steadfastness of one's mind is equal to a myriad weapons. We need nothing else."

The next morning, the Kaurava armies began to advance slowly towards the Pandava positions. The battlefield of Kurukshetra resembled

a huge city with its lofty tents and vast sea of soldiers. It seemed as though all the other cities and towns had been emptied of their menfolk with only the women and children remaining behind!

As the battle was about to begin, Sage Vyasa called on King Dhritarashtra. Prophetically he declared: "O King, the time has come for your sons and the other kings to depart from this mortal world. Don't grieve over their fate. Tell me, do you wish to see the battle? I'll give you an inner vision which will enable you to see the activities of the combatants on the battlefield."

Sorrowfully, Dhritarashtra exclaimed: "Sir, do I need a vision to see the destruction and death visited upon my kith and kin? I'd rather remain blind as I am now. Man should only see the good things of life. He should not look upon the evil and foul deeds. Therefore, I have no desire to witness this terrible war. It should be enough if someone is found who could convey to me the news of the battle."

Vyasa said: "Sanjaya will have the power to see from a distance and comment upon the war."

Sanjaya stayed near the blind king and began to describe the war. His narration proceeded like this.

Yudhishtira looked at his hordes and said: "Men, the pearly gates of a glorious paradise are open. Fight



valiantly so that after death you may win glory in the Heavens."

With the sole exception of Karna, the kings and their hordes got ready for the titanic struggle.

The two armies wheeled about in their initial formations. Bhima stood at the head of his army. Sikhandi was stationed at the centre. Satyaki led the left flank. Dhrishtadyumna rode round the formations to inspect their readiness for the ensuring combat.

On Arjuna's instructions, Lord Krishna drove his chariot into the middle of the armies facing each other. Arjuna looked around and saw all his relatives and near and dear ones arrayed in front of him. The longer he looked at them, the heavier his heart became at the thought that soon he would have to slaughter them

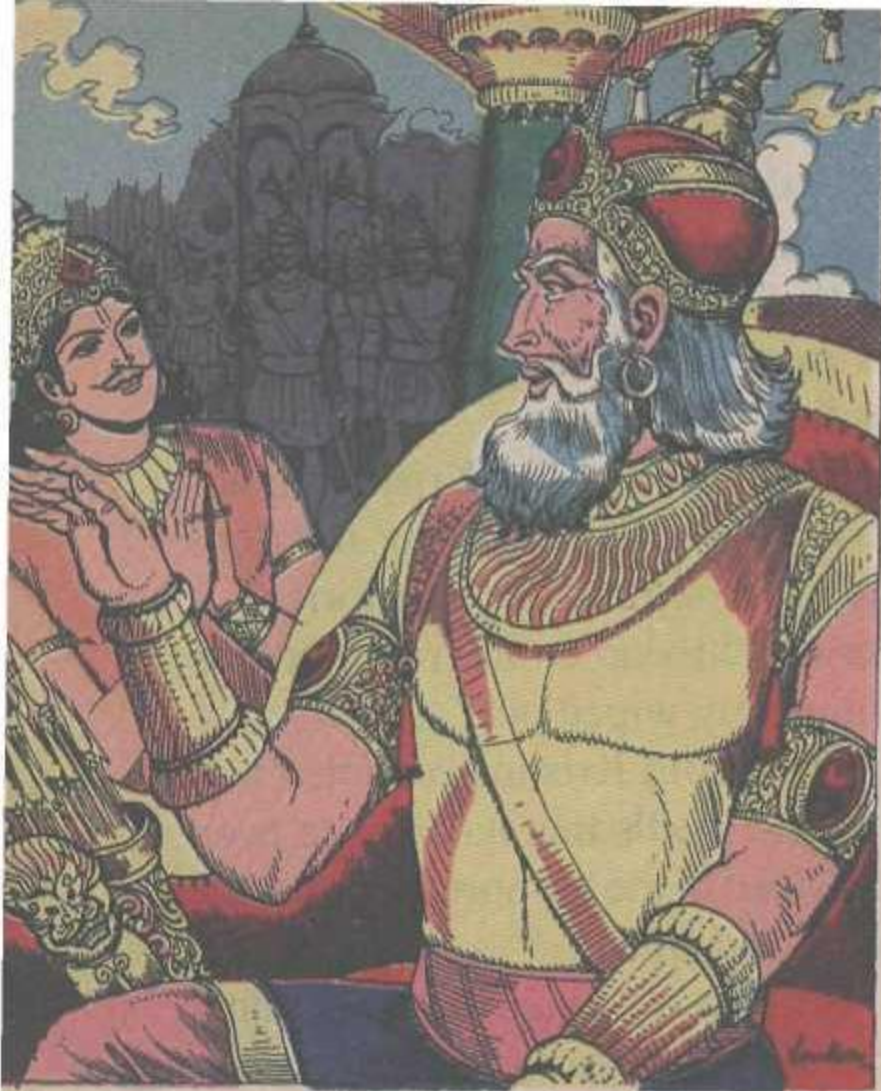
all. A deep doubt assailed him. Was it right to kill all those who were of his flesh and blood? As he wavered, his mighty bow began to slip from his fingers.

He spoke to Lord Krishna in anguish: "Must I kill all my relations and then regain our territories? It seems that our entire race will be completely wiped out!"

Then Lord Krishna consoled him with the words that have since been enshrined in the immortal classic, the *Bhagavad Gita*!

He said: "Arjuna do your duty, offering your actions to the Supreme. Don't think of the fruits thereof. The soul can never die. When it leaves its mortal home, the body, it seeks another habitation. It is the duty of the Kshatriya to fight. Is it proper for a





warrior to run away from danger? The wise look at things impartially. Happiness and sorrow are the same to them. They do not lose heart over anything. They bring to their work all the keenness and enthusiasm they are capable of. Therefore, you too should concentrate on the work at hand without losing heart. Go and fight with a will."

Krishna also revealed his Divinity to Arjuna. Arjuna picked up courage from the infinite wisdom of Lord Krishna. At the same time, in another part of the field, Yudhishtira took off his armour and to the intense surprise of his brothers walked towards Lord Bhishma with folded hands. Only Lord Krishna smiled

understandingly and said: "Yudhishtira goes to seek the blessings of Lord Bhishma and Drona before commencing the fight."

The Kauravas chortled with delight when they saw Yudhishtira advancing meekly towards them. They were sure that he was coming in to announce his surrender to them. High ran their hopes of victory. Now there would be no need to fight.

Yudhishtira, all unheeding, walked across to the spot where the formidable Bhishma stood and said: "Grandfather, you must permit us to fight against your invincible might. Bless us."

Bhishma said gently: "Yudhishtira, I am glad that you seek my blessings in this fashion. Victory will be yours. I have partaken of the salt of the Kauravas. Therefore, I must fight for them. Ask of me what you will and I shall grant it to you freely."

"In what way can we defeat you in battle? Give me that secret," asked Yudhishtira frankly.

Bhishma chuckled at hearing this and said: "That I don't know. No one has beaten me yet in battle. Death on the battlefield is not for me."

Yudhishtira had to be satisfied with the enigmatic answer. He then went over to Drona, and sought his blessings.

Drona blessed him and said, "I am pleased with your conduct, Yudhishtira. Fight well and may victory



crown your efforts."

Again Yudhishtira asked pointedly, "How can we defeat you in battle?"

Drona replied promptly, "You can kill me only when I become weaponless. That can happen only when I become stunned on account of the news of some great personal misfortune."

Yudhishtira thought over this, and then went to Lord Kripa and Salva to be blessed by them. He requested his uncle Salva to help them in defeating Karna. He then returned to the side of his own people.

In the meantime, Lord Krishna went to Karna and said, "Karna, you have sworn never to step on the battlefield as long as Bhishma is alive. Why don't you switch sides and fight along with the Pandavas against him? You can kill Bhishma, then change sides again, and lead the Kaurava armies against the Pandavas!"

Karna laughed at the queer logic behind Lord Krishna's words. But he replied seriously, "I cannot betray Duryodhana. I am willing to give up my life for his sake. I can never be a party to his downfall."

Yudhishtira looked at the vast array of the Kaurava forces and proclaimed loudly, "If there is any amongst you who would like to join us, you are welcome."

At once, Yuyutsu, one of the sons of Duryodhana, left the Kaurava ranks and joined the Pandavas. He was the only Kaurava who admired and respected Yudhishtira. He said, "Lord Yudhishtira, take me with you and I'll fight against the Kauravas."

Yudhishtira received him gladly. Then he put on his armour and climbed into his chariot. The war horns began to blow, and to the clanking sound of armour, and the neighing of the steeds, the great battle began.

— To continue



VELU THAMPY

TEXT : MEERA UGRA * ARTIST : T.G. SHETTY

NEARLY 200 YEARS AGO RAJA BALARAMA VARMA RULED IN TRAVANCORE. HIS DALAWA OR PRIME MINISTER WAS VELU THAMPY



VELU THAMPY ONCE OFFENDED THE RESIDENT OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY, COLONEL MACAULAY

RAJA BALARAMA VARMA, LIKE MANY RULERS OF HIS TIME WAS OBLIGED TO THE COMPANY FOR MILITARY HELP AND PROTECTION AND PAID AN ANNUAL TRIBUTE TO THEM. MACAULAY SENT HIM AN ULTIMATUM.

THE DALAWA DARE DISOBEY ME! I'LL TWIST HIS MASTER'S ARM!



THE TRIBUTE IS LONG OVERDUE. PAY UP IMMEDIATELY.... OR SACK YOUR DALAWA.



MACAULAY SENT LETTER AFTER LETTER, EACH TIME HEAPING MORE INSULTS ON THAMPY. FINALLY —

THESE TRADERS ARE NOW TELLING US HOW TO RULE OVER OUR LAND! THEY'VE TO BE PUT IN THEIR PLACE — AND SOON.



VELU THAMPY STARTED RECRUITING MORE MEN IN THE ARMY AND REPAIRING THE FORTS. THEN ONE DAY—

SEND A LETTER TO MACAULAY THAT I'M READY TO RESIGN. REQUEST HIM TO SEND AN ARMED GUARD TO ESCORT ME FROM ALLEPPEY TO CAUCUT.



MACAULAY WAS TAKEN IN. MEANWHILE, THAMPY'S TROOPS LED BY KUNJI PILLAY STEADILY MOVED TOWARDS COCHIN IN COVERED BOATS.



AND AROUND MIDNIGHT ON DECEMBER 28, 1808 ATTACKED THE RESIDENCY AT COCHIN. MACAULAY WAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE.



THE WARRIORS RANSACKED THE RESIDENCY AND DESTROYED ALL RECORDS. BUT MACAULAY MANAGED TO ESCAPE.



THE NEXT DAY BRITISH GARRISONS AT ALLEPPEY AND QUILON WERE ALSO ATTACKED.



THAMPY ARRIVED AT KUNDARA, A FEW MILES EAST OF QUILON AND ISSUED A PROCLAMATION.



VELU THAMPY SAYS THAT
WE MUST DRIVE OUT THE
BRITISH TO SAFEGUARD
OUR HOMES AND
INSTITUTIONS.



INSPIRED BY THAMPY'S WORDS THE PEOPLE
ROSE AGAINST THE BRITISH.



MEANWHILE, NEWS OF THE UPRISING HAD
REACHED THE COMPANY'S HEADQUARTERS AT
MADRAS. HELP WAS RUSHED TO QUILON FROM
ALL DIRECTIONS.....



... AND ON JANUARY 18, 1809 IN AN
ENCOUNTER LASTING SIX HOURS,
THAMPY'S ARMY WAS ROUTED AT QUILON



A FEW WEEKS LATER ON FEBRUARY 12,
THAMPY WAS DEFEATED YET AGAIN AT
ARAMBOLY.



ALASI ALL IS LOST.
HAD THE COCHIN MINISTER
PALIYATHU MENON NOT LET ME
DOWN AND SENT THE ARMY HE
PROMISED I MAY HAVE
DEFEATED THEM.



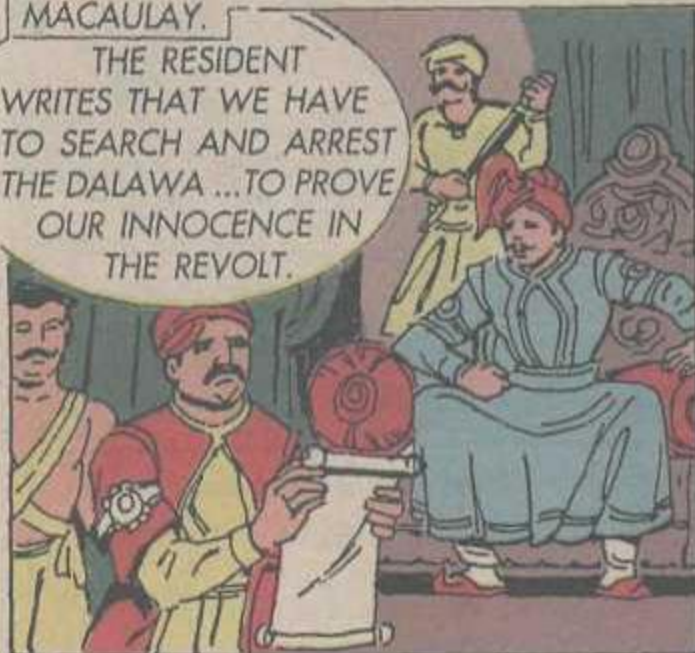
AS THE BRITISH FORCES PRESSED TOWARDS TRIVANDRUM, THAMPY WENT TO MEET HIS SOVEREIGN FOR THE LAST TIME.



FAREWELL, MASTER! HERE'S MY LETTER TO THE BRITISH RESIDENT, TAKING FULL BLAME FOR THE HOSTILITIES. I'VE ALSO MENTIONED THAT ALL MY ACTIONS WERE WITHOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE OR SANCTION. NOW YOU, AND THE PEOPLE WON'T COME TO ANY HARM.

BUT THAMPY'S LETTER DIDN'T SATISFY MACAULAY.

THE RESIDENT WRITES THAT WE HAVE TO SEARCH AND ARREST THE DALAWA ...TO PROVE OUR INNOCENCE IN THE REVOLT.



THE RAJA'S MEN SEARCHED HIGH AND LOW FOR THAMPY, WHO WAS ROAMING FROM PLACE TO PLACE IN DISGUISE. THEY FINALLY TRACED HIM AND HIS BROTHER TO A TEMPLE AT MUNNADY.



DO YOU HEAR THE FOOTSTEPS OUTSIDE, BROTHER? I'D RATHER NOT BE ARRESTED AND DISGRACED...



...KILL ME!

N-NO! I CAN'T!

THAMPY TURNED THE DAGGER ON HIMSELF, BUT DIDN'T DIE. THEN —

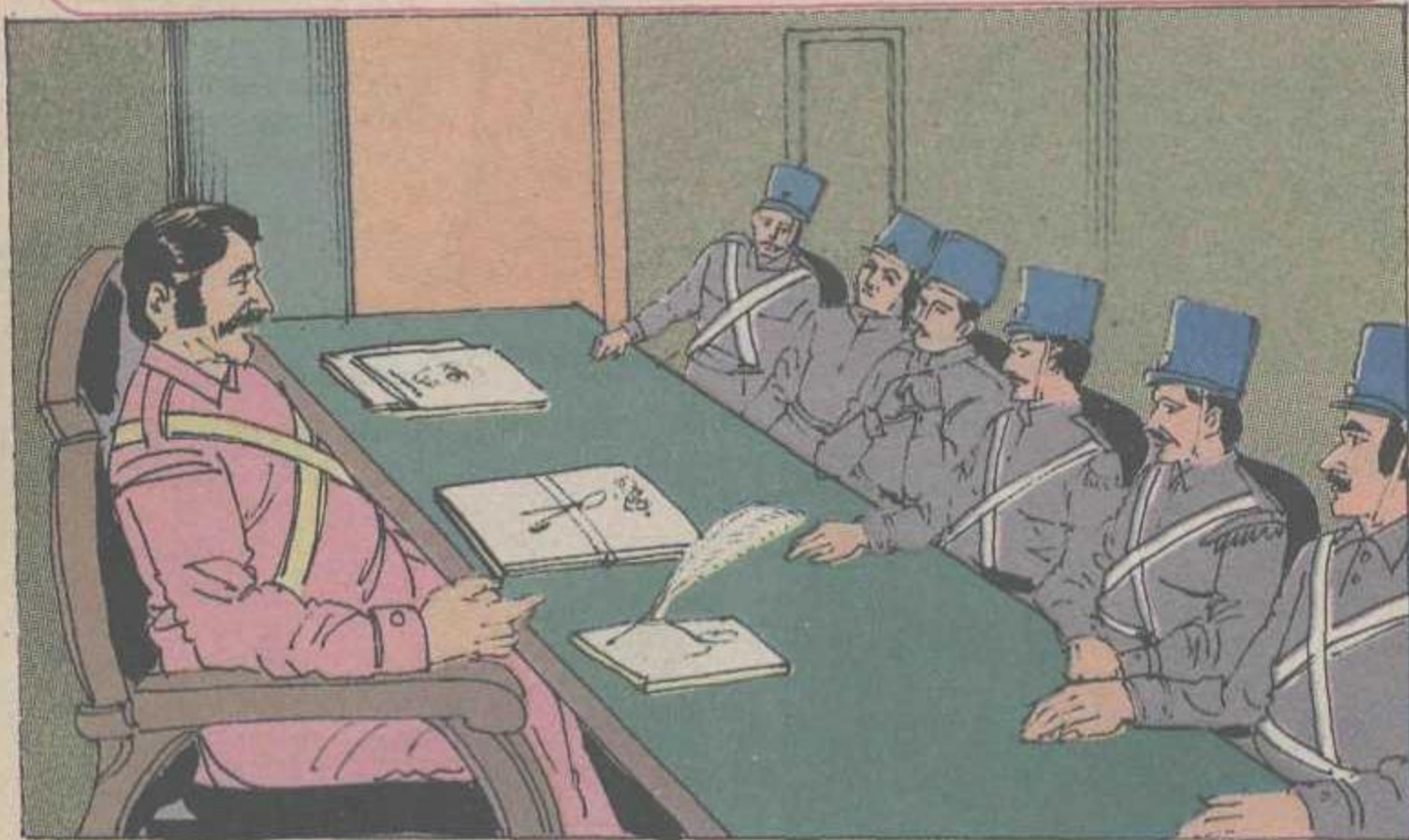
HURRY UP! BEHEAD ME! COWARD!



THIS TIME HIS BROTHER COMPLIED WITH THE COMMAND. VELU THAMPY DIED JUST AS HE'D LIVED — COURAGEOUSLY AND HONOURABLY.

END

The Saga of 1857



The narration so far: The greater part of India, led by the common sepoys and some of the valliant princes, rise against the foreign rulers. Their leaders are the young Rani of Jhansi and Nana Sahib Peshwa, among others.

In the previous issue we saw how the situation forced Nana Sahib to retreat. We now turn our eyes to the city of Jhansi.

It was the British camp at Mhow. There was great excitement. After their repeated defeats at different fronts, the beginning of the year 1858 had brought them some new hope.

The captains at Mhow were drinking. They now had a new general to lead them. He was Sir Hugh Rose, a veteran fighter. He knew well the Indian situation.

"Are you sure that the Rani of Jhansi would herself lead her army?

Is that possible? I have never heard of any other Rani doing any such thing!" Sir Hugh, while walking up and down the floor of a hall, asked some of the officials of the East India Company.

"Yes, Sahib, she is extraordinarily brave!" said the officials. They were Indians.

Sir Hugh laughed. "Brave! She may appear brave to you natives, shouting and thundering at you and ordering you about. In the battlefield

the kind of bravery necessary is quite different. For how long can she face our cannon-balls? She will be blown up in a moment!"

The older official did not seem pleased with the Sahib's impression.

"Well, Sahib," he said, "we are your servants and we are faithful to our masters. What we say is true. She is no ordinary woman. You may blow anybody with your cannon. But do you think that she would come out simply to allow you to do that? Like any intelligent commander she would, of course, take position behind her own cannons and face your cannons!"

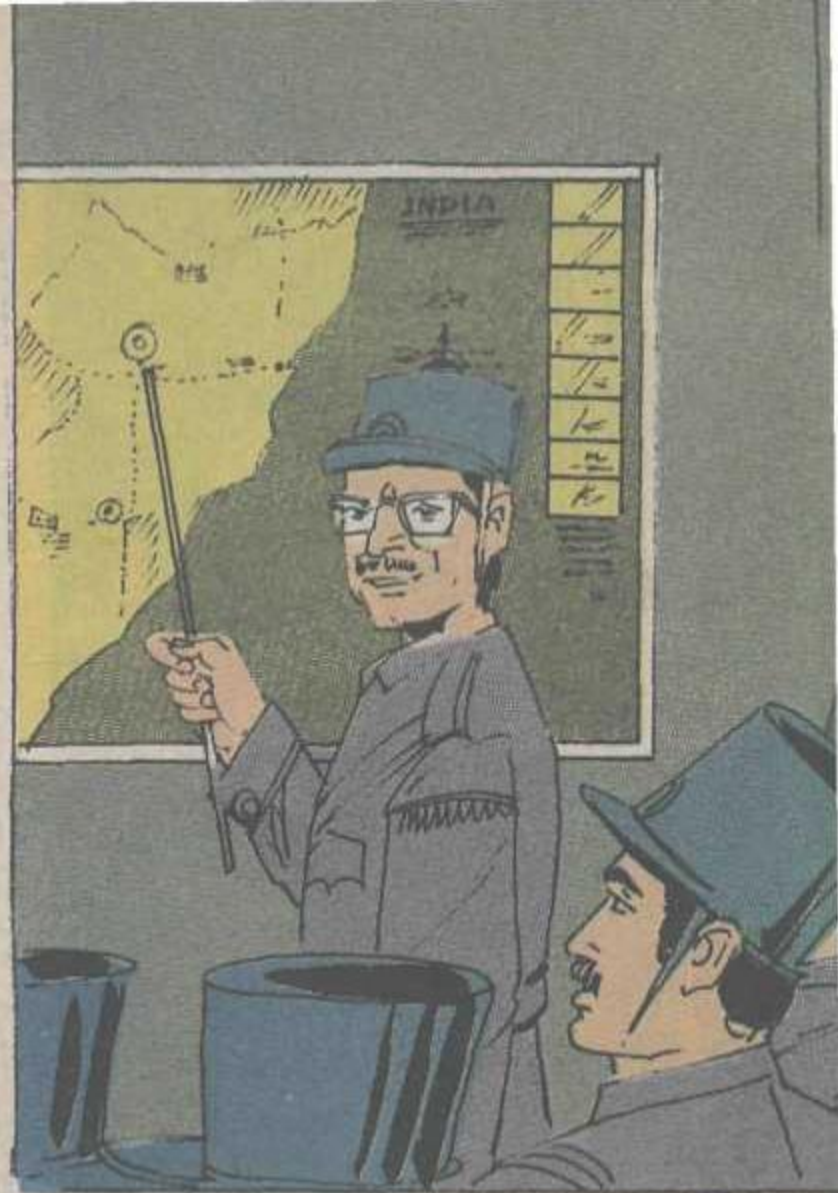
"How many cannons does she have?" asked Hugh Rose, while playing with his pistol.

"That we have not counted. Surely, all the cannons are not on display. They are inside that huge hall at the eastern side of the castle, close to the armoury and the gunpowder store," said the elderly man naively.

Sir Hugh Rose was looking at a drawing. "You mean the hall onto which a banyan tree leans? Is the gunpowder store close to that hall?" he asked.

The native officials looked at one another. Unwittingly they had given out a secret of the castle.

"Don't you feel guilty. Does not your faith say that you must be true to your salt? Is the Company not your master? Don't you Indians call your employers *maa-baap* or parents? You



are only helping your parents, the East India Company. Here is your reward for being dutiful to the Company!"

Sir Hugh patted the natives on the back and pushed a gold mohur into the hands of each of them.

While the enemy were planning their crooked strategy, at Jhansi the Rani was addressing the sirdars, captains of the army, and the feudal lords under her : "My kinsmen, elders, brothers, and my children, some of you were under the impression that with the Company's office in our city demolished, we had become free. But the enemy is desperate. They came from beyond the seven seas not to retreat after receiving a blow or two.





"They will try to stick on to our land like leeches sucking our blood. We have received reports that they are heading towards Jhansi. What is your advice to us?"

The noblemen and captains kept quiet for a moment. Then an old Thakur, respected by all, stood up.

"Mother, we bow to you. We are not here to give you advice, but to receive your orders. Providence has made you our guardian. We have complete faith in you," he said, his voice steeped in sincerity.

"You're a brave child of the soil. You won't hesitate, if necessary, to soak the soil with your blood, for the sake of your honour. Am I right?"

asked the Rani.

"You are right, absolutely right, O Mother!" was the thunderous chorus raised by the assembly.

"I'm lucky to be your mother," said Rani Lakshmi Bai. "Now my children, get ready to face the enemy. If choose we must between dishonour and death, we must choose the latter!"

Jhansi was not required to wait for long. A fortnight later the enemy was sighted on the horizon. The army of Jhansi came out from its cantonment and assembled in front of the castle. The Rani spoke to them from the terrace and then came down, dressed like a soldier and rode her favourite horse and galloped forward. At once, the soldiers broke into a deafening roar and followed her.

A terrible battle was fought. The setting sun could not be clearly seen because of the dust and smoke. When the false cloud subsided, it was seen that the enemy army had retreated.

"Victory to our Mother Rani Lakshmi Bai!" shouted thousands of soldiers and citizens.

Back at the castle, the Rani rushed into her room. On the bejewelled bedstead slept the little prince, her adopted son. She took the lamp from the attending maid's hand and gazed at the child's peaceful face.

"My child! Sleep on. But I must remain awake to ensure your sleep and that of my million other chil-

dren," said the Rani, heaving a sigh.

She then kept busy taking care of those of her fighters who had been injured. She even visited the wounded horses and enquired about their treatment. She did not sleep a wink.

The battle was resumed in the morning. Now it was more a fight with cannons than with guns and swords. Hundreds of enemy soldiers were killed. The battle continued late into the night, the sky dazzled with fatal fireworks. At midnight a huge cannon-ball, fired from the castle, killed the chief lieutenant of Sir Hugh Rose. "O God!" cried out the general. "It's the Rani herself who is directing the firing!"

Sir Hugh Rose's teeth were clenched. He changed his strategy. Next day, while a part of his army kept the defenders of the city engaged in a straight fight, another part inched its way towards the eastern part of the castle. Nobody but Sir Hugh and his closest confidants knew what the purpose was. Even the Rani's advisers were unable to read the enemy's motive. The army of Jhansi concentrated its might to defend the forefront of the castle.

Suddenly a sound shook the region. Nobody had ever heard a sound of that volume. The eastern part of the castle had burst like a volcano. Stones were flying high. Deafening noise continued for a long time.



Alas, the enemy had aimed their cannons at the gun-powder store and had destroyed it, thanks to the intelligence they had received by giving bribes. The old banyan tree and a cluster of tamarind trees were burning pathetically, stripped to their skeletons. A number of workers; including experts at handling cannons and making gun-powder had been killed.

Even though the army of Jhansi did not give up, a gloom descended on the castle. But the misfortune was followed before long by good news. The chief commander of Nana Sahib, Tatya Tope, himself a soldier of high calibre and undaunted courage, was



coming to add to the Rani's defence.

Indeed, he came and attacked the enemy from the rear, but by then the enemy had been reinforced by new battalions supplied to it by some of the native rulers who had sold themselves to the Company. Tatya Tope fought bravely, but had to retreat.

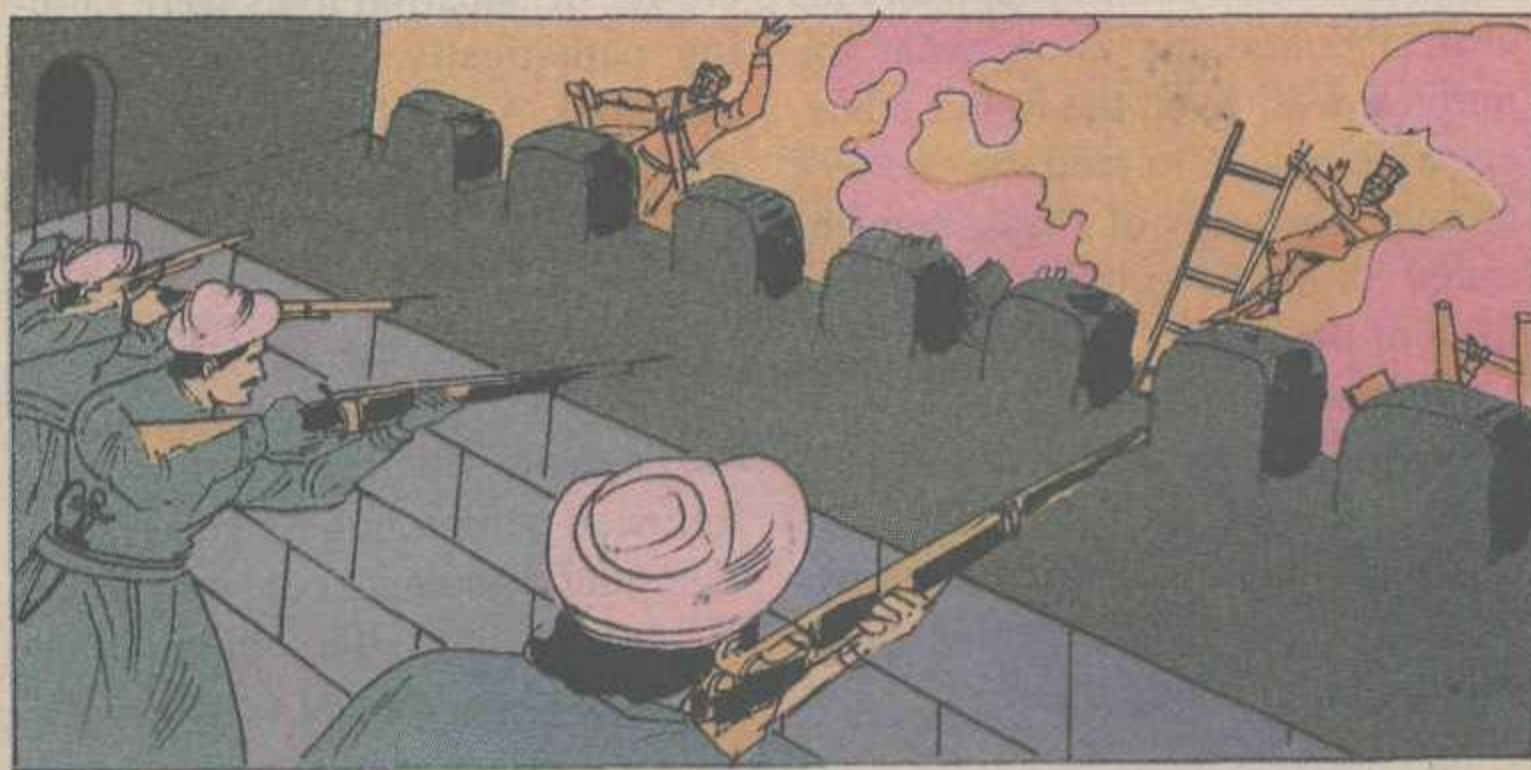
By and by the British army reached the castle. But there was no way they could enter it. Even the ruined part of the castle had been overnight fortified. But the enemy had come prepared with huge ladders. Four Englishmen, all army Lieutenants, Dick, Meikljohn, Nonus and Fox, took lead in climbing the ladders.

But, hit by bullets, they rolled down, dead. Let us have a glimpse of the situation from a record left by an English eye-witness:

"No sooner did we turn into the

road leading towards the gate, than the enemy's bugle sounded, and a fire of indescribable fierceness opened upon us from the whole line of the walls and from the tower of the fort overlooking this site. For a time it appeared like a sheet of fire, out of which burst a store of bullets, round shots, and rockets destined for our annihilation ... But the fire of the enemy waxed stronger, and amidst the chaos of sounds, of volleys of musketry and roaring of cannon, hissing and bursting rockets, stink-pots, infernal machines, huge stones, blocks of wood, and trees, all hurled upon our heads, it seemed as though Pluto and the Furies had been loosened upon us, carrying death amongst us fast. At this instant a bugle sounded on our right for the Europeans to retire."

(To continue)



Harnessing the Waters

- ◆ Text: Jayanthi Mahalingam
- ◆ Illustrations: Goutam Sen

At Ramanathapura, on the left bank of the Kaveri, around 30 km out of Kodagu, a huge rock looms out of the river. A Shiva temple stands on it. Known locally as Gogerbham, it is said that Sri Rama worshipped a *shivalingam* atop the rock to atone for the sin of killing Ravana. People believe that Adi Shankara himself consecrated the temple.



Ramanathapura Temple

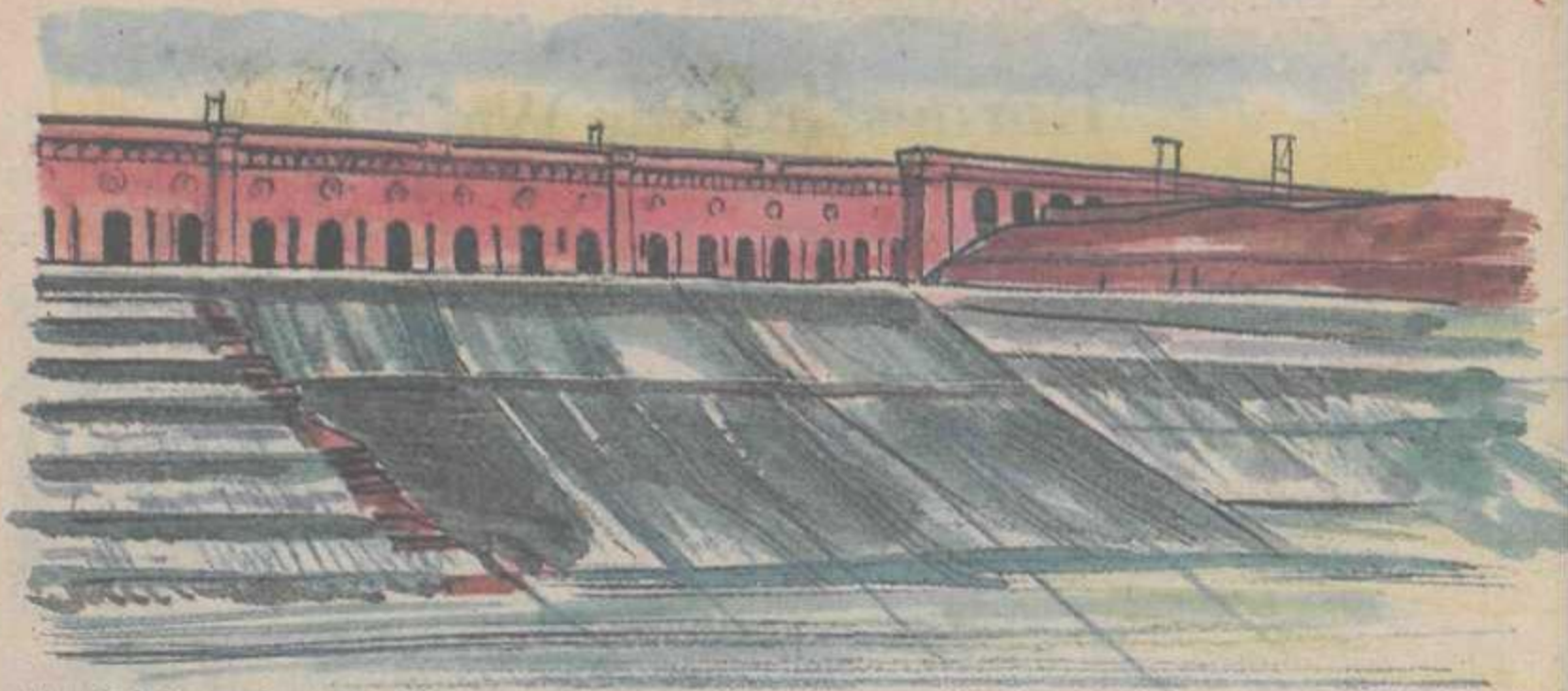
In the village of Kattepura, which lies downstream, an ancient dam slows down the flow of the Kaveri. The dam, Jangamaghatte, was built

900 years ago by Jangamas or ascetics of the Lingayat sect. The stones, which are 1.2 m high, are precisely hewn and stacked. The river seeps slowly, almost wonderingly, through the stones as if Kaveri herself were amazed at this engineering feat achieved by a band of wandering holy men without the aid of technology.



The river cascades over a drop of 20 metres at Chunchanakatte (named after Chuncha, a tribal chieftain who is supposed to have built a dam here). The narrow gorge through which the Kaveri tumbles is called Dhanushkoti, after its better-known namesake at the southern tip of India. Sita, so speaketh the legend, bathed in the river at this spot (named *Seeteya Bachchalu*, or *Seeta's Bathing Place*) and there is a shrine built by the locals to commemorate the event. On the river bank is a large temple to Kodandarama.

Chunchanakatte Falls



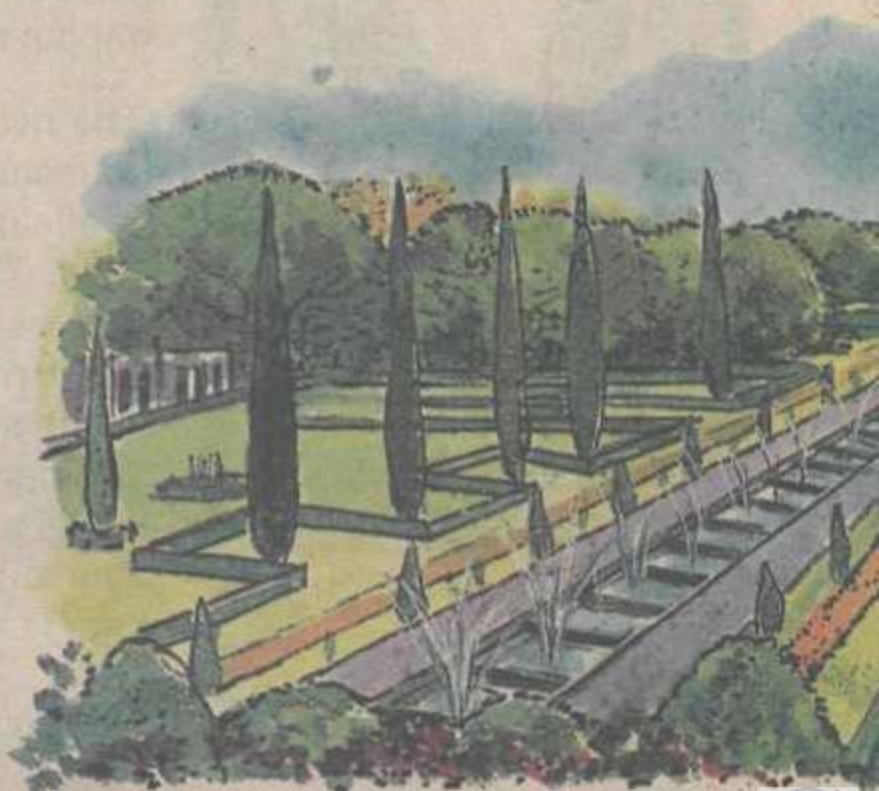
The Krishnarajasagara Dam

More modern dams check the waters of the Kaveri at several points in the state. The most famous of these is the Kannambadi or Krishnarajasagara dam, built at the confluence of the Kaveri and her tributaries, Hemavathi and Lakshmanatirtha.

The dam was a single man's daring dream. Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya (he was later knighted by the British and awarded the Bharat Ratna after Independence) had vast experience in designing such mammoth projects. He was an engineer with the Bombay government for 25 years and returned to Mysore in 1909 as the state's chief engineer. He was already well-known for designing and installing automatic sluice gates in a dam near Khadakvasla near Pune in 1903. The gates opened automatically for discharging excess water and closed when the water level fell. Though he had patented the invention, Visvesvaraya refused to accept royalty for it. He had also introduced the block irrigation system for the proper distribution of water.

The waters of the Kaveri had been harnessed by India's first hydro-electric station (started in 1902) at Sivasamudram, about 35 km downstream from Kannambadi. It supplied power to the Kolar

Brindavan Gardens



gold-mines (now shut down). But during the dry months, the supply of electricity became erratic and sometimes non-existent.

When the manager of the mines came to Visvesvaraya with a request for steady power to work the hoists, the chief engineer saw his chance of building a dam that would not only benefit the Kolar gold fields but also thousands of farmers. The Maharaja of Mysore, Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, was at first taken aback at the immensity of the task: a dam costing rupees 2.5 crore - as much money as the state had spent on irrigation in the previous 50 years! But he finally agreed to render full support to the scheme.



Drilling in the Kolar gold-mine

In 1911, the foundations of the Kannambadi dam were laid. It was designed to be 2,621 m long and 43 m high. The reservoir was to have a capacity of 1400 million cubic metres of water. By 1915, the dam was raised to the height of 24 m. The Kolar gold-mines could now obtain a regular supply of electricity. The dam was raised to its full height in 1924.

And it was not concrete, but an indigenously prepared material called *surkhi* that made the dam possible. *Surkhi* was well-burnt brickbats ground together with unslaked lime. It was cheap and easily available in the vicinity. It set slowly, but when it did, it had as much strength as cement. In this case, *surkhi* had given the Kannambadi dam ten times the strength that it actually required.

The dam was named 'Krishnarajasagara' after the Maharaja. The Brindavan gardens 18 m below the dam became a trendsetter when work began on it in 1927. Other large Indian dams later developed similar gardens. The 8-hectare gardens, laid out in three terraces, was opened to the public in 1936.



Later, a canal, appropriately named after Visvesvaraya, was cut out of the reservoir at a height of 18 m and it transported the water over a distance of 45 km. When finally finished, the project had the potential of irrigating 36,000 additional hectares. A score of engineers had supervised over 10,000 labourers in this immense task. Once, when a flood threatened to burst through freshly-laid masonry, the engineers and workers toiled throughout the night by the light of lamps to build a temporary channel to divert the floodwaters.

But Visvesvaraya was not the only man to think of damming the Kaveri at that point. Workmen clearing the ground for laying the foundation of the dam, uncovered a stone slab dated 1794. A Persian inscription on it read: "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, Hazrat Tippoo Sultan, the Shadow of God, the Lord Bestower of Gifts, laid the foundation of theDam across the river Kaveri to the West of the Capital..... The start is from me but its completion rests with God."

Sir M. Visvesvaraya

Sir M. Visvesvaraya (1860-1962), the *dewan* of the former Mysore state, can rightly be called Mysore's guardian angel and guiding spirit. He was instrumental in setting up the Bhadravathi Iron and Steel Works, the Mysore University, the Government Soap Factory, and many more industries and institutions. The number of schools in the state more than doubled during his tenure as *dewan*, a post he held from 1913 to 1918. He was chief engineer for three years before that. He believed that India's progress lay in its industrialisation. His slogan was, "Industrialise or perish!"

Sir Visvesvaraya wrote books on planning much before independent India's ambitious Five-year Plans.



Sir M. Visvesvaraya

He was so agile and active, that even at the age of 86, he could climb a staircase 75 feet high, totally unaided, a feat that daunted men half his age!

Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV



LOST AND FOUND



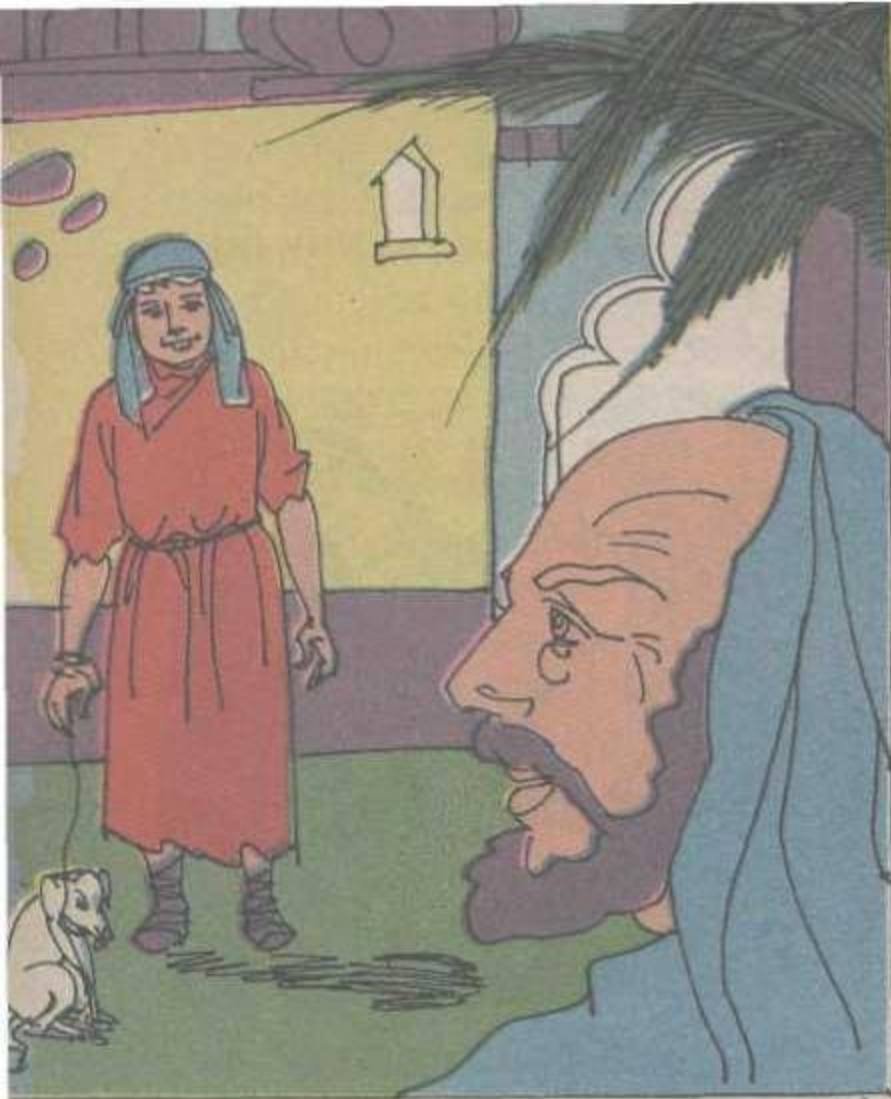
Long, long ago there lived a shepherd in a wee little glen on the mountain. He was a very simple lad, child-like and innocent. He happily spent his days grazing his flock of sheep on the tender green pastures. Often many a weary wayfarer would recount to him about the beautiful hamlets that lay beyond the hills. But never had he a chance to venture into them though he always dreamt of doing so one day.

Once a colourful carnival was being held in the town not far away. The young man decided that he must visit it. So donning himself in his best attire, he set forth across the valley with his little dog faithfully following him. He reached his destination after a long pleasant walk.

Alas, he was utterly bewildered and confused at the grand sight that met his eyes. The fanfare was at the highest point of its excitement, full of noise and hubbub. Crowds of people jostled, some pushed their way from the inside of the area to the outside, while some others were doing the same from outside, trying to get in. There were some who from the right turned to the left, while others were attempting to go from the left to the right. Never had he seen so many people at a time.

The young man grew nervous. He stood at a corner of the carnival, blinking at the merry but jostling crowd.

'If I mingle with the great sea of people, it is very likely that I shall



lose myself. Unless I fix up a distinct mark to identify myself, how shall I be able to find myself?' thought the youth, logically indeed.

Suddenly, his little dog playing at his heels gave him an idea. He brought out a rope from his bag, tied one end around his pet's neck and the other he wound it around his own waist.

'Now surely there's no fear of losing myself! But in case I manage to do that, my little dog will prove me to be myself!' he assured himself and marched forward.

He had not gone very far when suddenly a tap on his shoulder startled him.

"Good day, young man," greeted

an old stranger who was closely observing him with amusement. "It seems you are up to some interesting adventure with your cute little doggy."

"Oh! I have only tied the dog unto myself so that in case I get lost in this great gathering, I can find myself again!" explained the young man with a confident flair.

"That's brilliant indeed!" exclaimed the old man with a chuckle.

Soon both became good friends, the old man and the shepherd boy. They frolicked in the fanfare to their heart's content. Occasionally a gentle yelp from his pet assured the youth that he had not been lost after all!

Evening came and the two companions were hungry and tired after hours of merriment. They had a square meal each and then fell fast asleep in a cosy little barn.

In the middle of the night the old man suddenly woke up. He found his friend sleeping blissfully with his pet still tied to his waist. Very stealthily he undid the rope and winding it around his own waist went back to sleep.

The next morning found the lad in utter bewilderment. Frantically he shook his companion up.

"Wake up, dear friend, wake up!"

"What's the matter?" asked the other, sitting up and rubbing his eyes.

"I am now really lost!" cried out

the youth throwing up his arms in despair.

"What do you mean?"

"The dog is no longer tied unto me!" he complained nervously.

"So what?" enquired the old man.

"Don't you understand? How can I ever find myself now?" lamented the young man, on the verge of shedding tears.

Suddenly, the cute little dog appeared from behind the old man's back.

"Good God! The dog is now tied to your waist!" stammered out the shepherd, awe-struck. "How could that be possible?"

"Why not?"

"Well, I know not for certain if this body is myself or thou!" he bawled out in total bewilderment.

"The body by all means is yourself, dear friend!" assured the other.

"If it is truly myself, then how come the dog is tied to you? On the

other hand, if my body is truly thyself, then who am I? Where am I? I am indeed lost, never to be found again! Oh no!" bemoaned the shepherd as he sat down with his head buried in his hands and slowly dozed off.

Meanwhile the old man untied the dog from his waist and quietly wound the rope around the youth's leg. The happy little animal yelped and quickly jumped unto his master's shoulder waking him up.

"Hurrah! I have found myself at last!" exclaimed the elated lad coddling his pet.

The old man smiled and then embracing his young friend took his leave. As he walked he pondered and deeply did he ponder on an unforgettable question that the simple shepherd boy had raised in his mind.

'Is this body of mine truly myself? If not, then who am I really?'

-Retold by Anup Kishore Das





The Simple Colourful Folk-BANJARAS:

The Banjaras migrated to the Deccan following the invasion by the armies of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. Banjara history goes back 2,000 years. They believed to be the descendants of the Roma gypsies of Europe, who migrated to India through the rugged mountains of Afghanistan. Rajasthan became their home. In the 14th century, the Banjaras migrated into central India. They worked for the Mughals as transporters of their arms, tents, and provision. They even acted as spies for the British, later switching over to help Tipu Sultan.

The Banjaras are a simple folk with a migratory instinct. They wander and set up their modest hamlets wherever work is available. They are the owners of just a few domestic possessions, like earthen vessels, bamboo, mats, and some rickety wooden articles. The members of this tribe are governed by an elected leader.

The Banjaras are fond of festivals and share some of the religious beliefs of the Hindus and consider Lord Venkateswara of Tirupati as their family deity. Song and dance come naturally to the women of the tribe. The Banjaran dress is perhaps the most colourful and elaborate of any tribal group. Their full length skirt blazing red along with the *odhinis* (mantle) which cover their head are elaborately embroidered. Their *cholis* (blouses) are studded with little mirrors. A variety of jewellery, made of silver, brass, gold, cowries, ivory and animal bone, are a special part of the Banjara wardrobe. The men dress more simply in a dhoti, jacket, and a turban—the look of a traditional Indian villager.

- Shital



MAYURDHVAJA

~ The Meaning of Tears in His Left Eye ~

In ages gone by there was a prosperous kingdom called Ratnagara, ruled by a king named Mayurdhvaja.

The king was extremely kind and generous and was loved by his subjects. His courtiers advised him to perform a certain Yajna. The custom of this particular Yajna required the king to let loose a handsome horse, to be followed by his representatives. If nobody detained the horse, it would be assumed that nobody contested the king's claim to greatness.

It so happened that when King Mayurdhvaja's horse was roaming the earth, King Yudhishtira's horse, too, was doing the same for a similar purpose. Mayurdhvaja's horse was accompanied by his brave son Suchitra, while Yudhishtira's was accompanied by Sri Krishna and Arjuna. As the two parties came face to face with each other, Suchitra cast a spell of sleep on Sri Krishna and Arjuna and passed by them.

On waking up, Krishna was surprised at the prince's deed and became curious about his father. Disguised as Brahmins, Krishna and Arjuna met Mayurdhvaja. "O King," said Krishna, "a lion has detained my son. It says that it will leave him only if I could present to it half of your body!"

At once the queen came out and said, "I'm the left half of his body. Lead me to the lion!"

"But the lion must have

the right half of the king's body!" insisted Krishna.

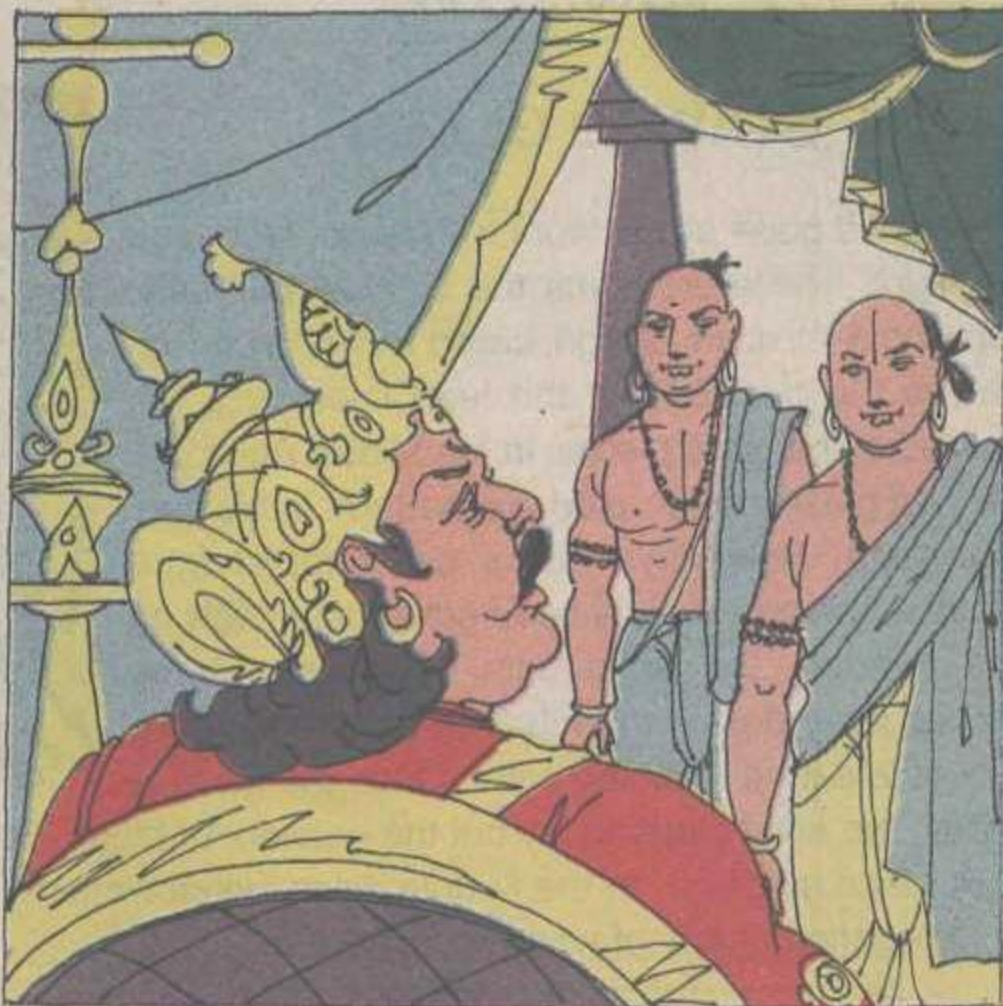
"Cut me into two by all means, if my right side could be that useful!" said the king.

As Krishna pretended to get ready to carry out the operation, he observed a drop of tear in the king's left eye.

"Your shedding tears means you are not wholly willing to give me what I want. Hence I won't take it," said Krishna.

"My friend, my left eye weeps because my left side cannot be put to as useful a purpose as the right side!" explained the king.

At that Krishna revealed to him his true identity and embraced him. After the king had performed his Yajna, he accompanied Krishna and Arjuna to participate in King Yudhishtira's Yajna.



THE MAGICAL UNICORN

The Unicorn is a mythical creature which probably never existed. But years ago people did believe in its existence. On the royal coat of arms of Britain, one can find two creatures on either side of the shield—a lion on one side and a unicorn on the other. A unicorn is a strange horse like creature with a long elegant horn on its forehead. Queen Elizabeth 1 was supposed to have possessed a unicorn's horn which,



apart from being worth a huge sum of money, was also supposed to have healing powers and could protect people from poison. According to a legend, the lion and the unicorn were deadly enemies and would invariably kill each other if they were to meet. That is why they are separated by the shield in the coat of arms. Thus the lion and the unicorn found a place of honour on each side of the British royal coat of arms.

RAINBOW

- Shital

STAINED GLASS

Stained glass artists work with glass, lead, and light. The artist plans the window carefully, drawing a full scale design, called a *cartoon*, which shows the positions of the lead lines, and the colours of the glass pieces. In the Middle Ages, the stained glass maker used glass made in his own workshop. Nowadays artists can choose from glass which has already been coloured. Following the cartoon, the artist cuts the glass. Some pieces have designs painted on them and these pieces are fired to fix the paint. Once the glass is ready, the artist starts to lay out the network of leads. Soon a complete panel is built piece by piece. In the Middle Ages, windows acted as picture-books for a congregation, many of whom could not read.





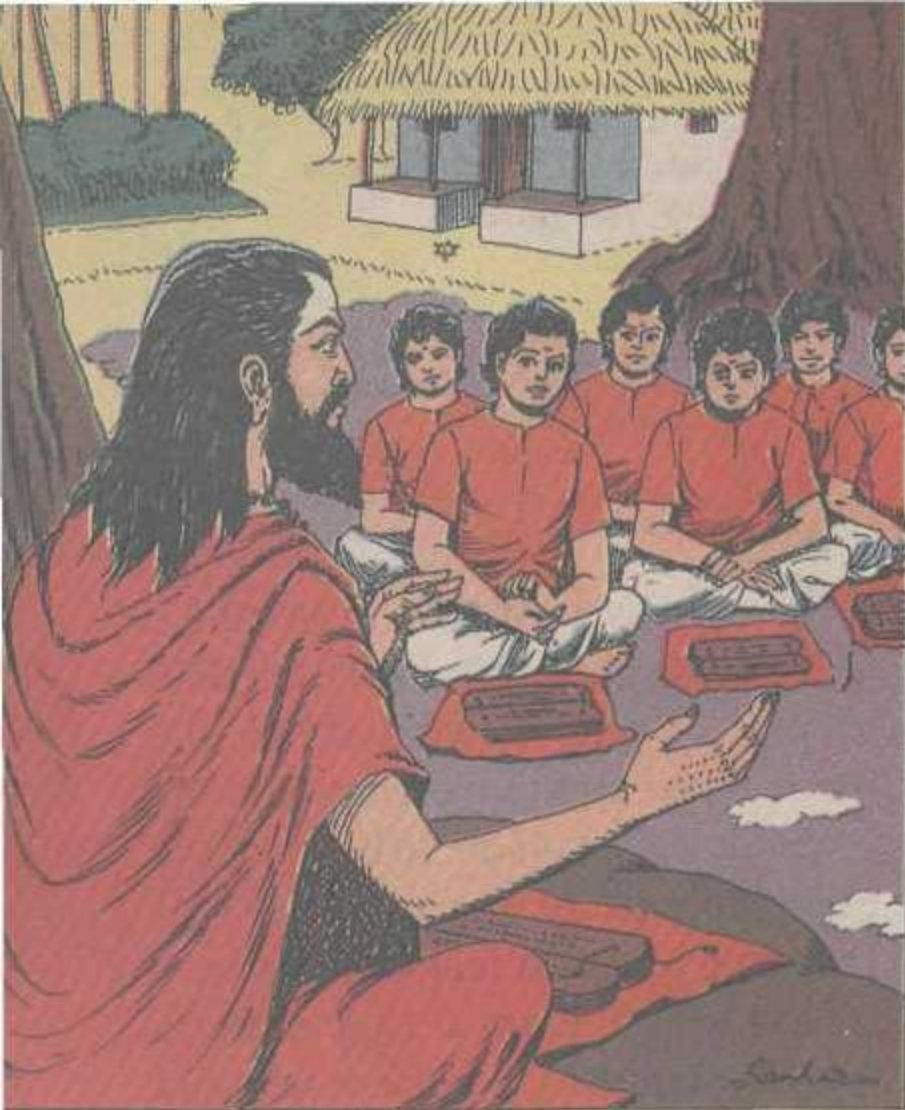
New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire

True Disciple

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. Gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikram did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree and brought the corpse down. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O King, normally you should be enjoying a good sleep at this hour of the night. Instead of doing that, what makes you go through this strange ritual? By the way, are you in any way obliged to your guru? Has he demanded his *gurudakshina* in the form of any favour? Are you toiling like this ceaselessly to please him? You must listen to the story of such a guru. Let me tell you all about Sadanand." The vampire then began his narration.

Long ago, Sadanand was running a *gurukul* in the forest called



Kadambavan. He was a scholar, well-versed in the Vedas and Upanishads and Puranas. Disciples flocked to his gurukul, where he did not impose any rigid discipline as far as studies were concerned. Each student had the freedom to choose his own subject of study and the guru would only give general guidance and encourage the disciple to study on his own. This way, he could give individual attention to everybody. And the disciple had also the option of leaving the gurukul whenever he felt that there was nothing more to study in the subject of his choice. For that matter, Sadanand knew that there could be no end to the study of any subject, but he wanted his disciples to add to their

knowledge from experience and practical life.

Another strange thing about him was that he never asked for gurudakshina. Instead, he saw to it that his disciples were put to hard work in the *ashram*-like watering the plants, taking care of the cows and goats the ashram maintained, and bringing firewood from the forest. They attended to all the chores their guru gave them most willingly, because the wisdom and knowledge they got from him was greater than the labour they put in at the gurukul. Somehow or other, word spread about the hard work one was obliged to carry out in the ashram and naturally, its strength dwindled as the years went by. Youngsters were reluctant to study under an exacting guru like Sadanand.

One day, two young boys named Mukund and Jayant, both belonging to a family of farmers, went to Sadanand and expressed their desire to study at his gurukul. They both wished to study medicine. Sadanand accepted them as his disciples and explained to them what they had to do in return, by attending to the chores in the ashram. The youth agreed. After one year, they went up to the guru. "Sire! We feel we've acquired enough knowledge of herbs and their efficacy in curing people of their illnesses. We wish you permitted us to leave the gurukul. However, we would like to

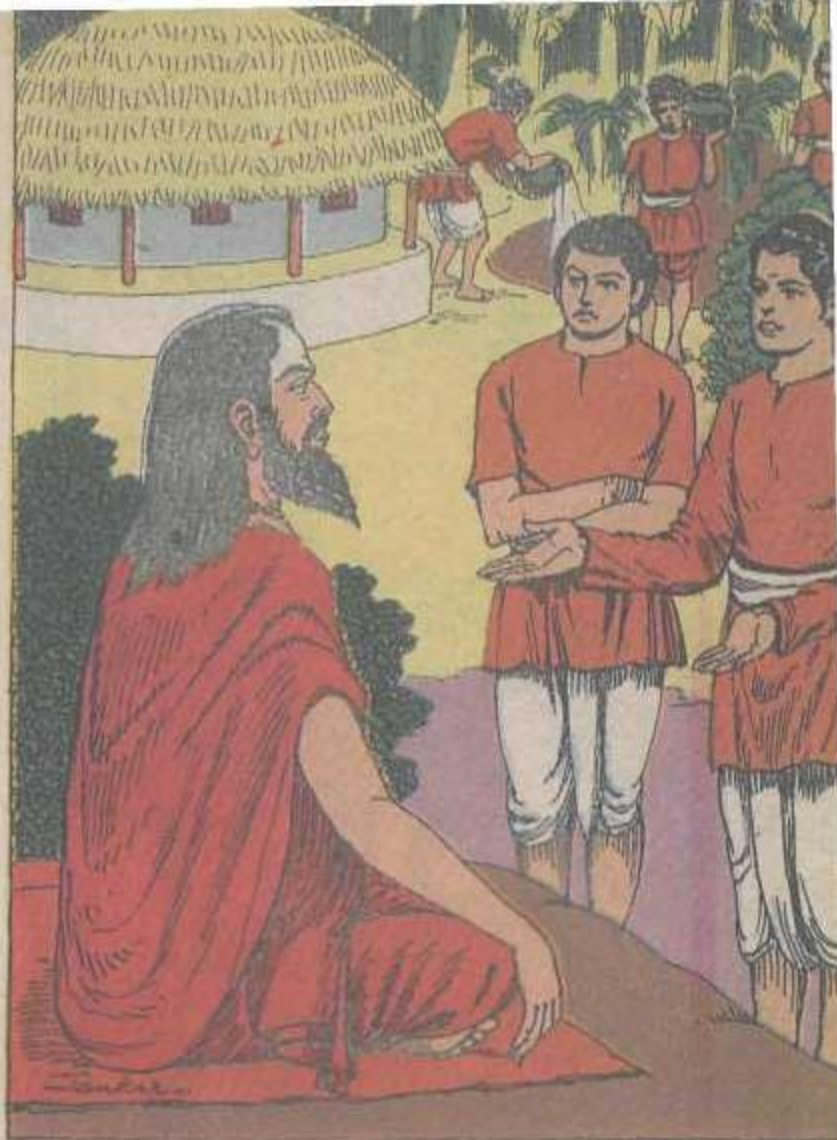
give you our gurudakshina, apart from whatever we've been doing for the ashram. Please tell us what you would wish to have from us."

Sadanand said smilingly: "I haven't till now taken any dakshina from any of my disciples. You have expressed your desire to give me dakshina in return for the knowledge you've acquired. Well, I shall come to you after one year, during which time you would have earned an income by treating people of their illnesses and diseases. You may then give me ten thousand coins each!"

The young men were not so confident whether they would earn enough to give their guru what he was asking of them. However, they agreed. They then took leave of Sadanand and returned home.

Back in his village, Mukund sought out the leading *vaidya* there. "Sir, I've just come from the gurukul of Sadanand after studying medicine. I wish to start a hospital in this village, and I need your help. If you've no objection, we both shall run the hospital and share whatever income we get. I must make enough money to pay dakshina to my guru." He then told the *vaidya* how he had to pay ten thousand coins to Sadanand.

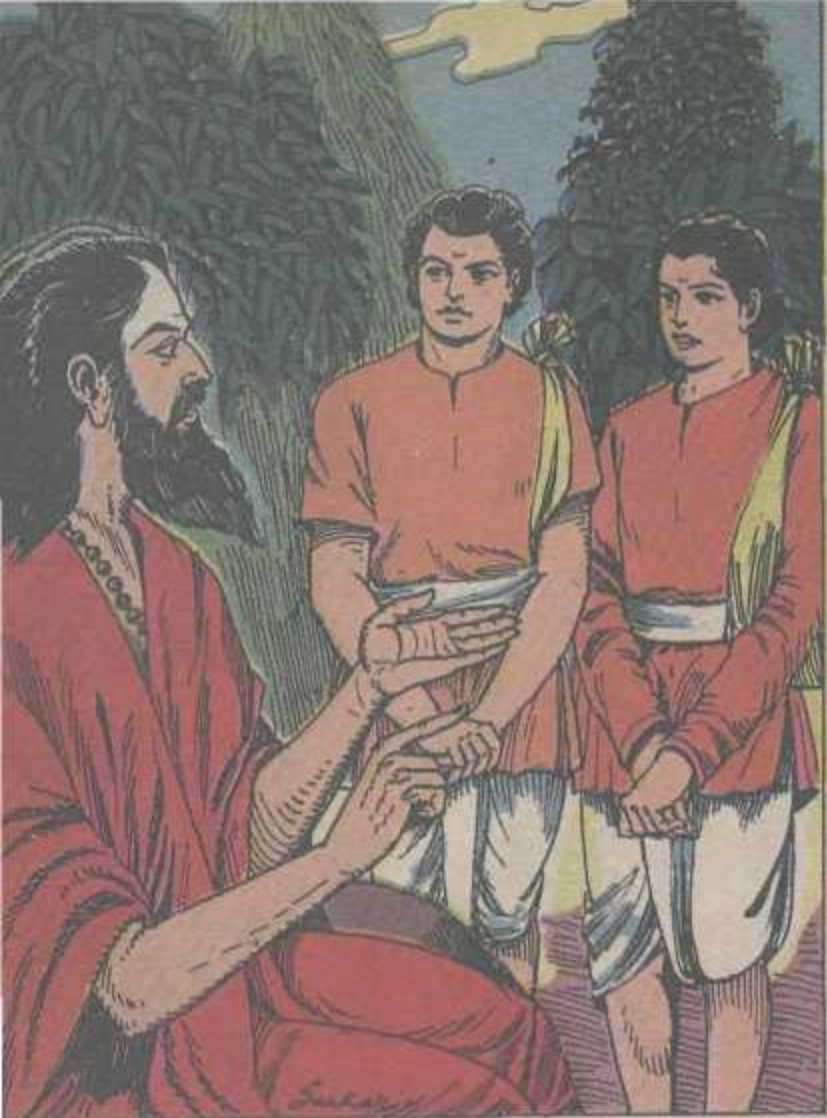
"Look here, Mukund," said Baidyanath, "when people know that you had your education and training at the gurukul of Sadanand, they'll flock to you. If we were to run the



hospital together, you'll only be a loser, because I stand to gain from your popularity. So, I suggest that you marry my daughter and we shall run the hospital as a family concern. You can have a portrait of Sadanand at the entrance and show your reverence to him by garlanding the picture every morning. Everybody would then know that you are his disciple and patients from even the neighbouring villages will come to our hospital. That'll boost your income."

Mukund agreed to the proposal and married Baidyanath's daughter. He opened a hospital in his village, Sivagiri, where he hung a portrait of his guru and garlanded it every morn-





ing. Soon word went round that a disciple of guru Sadanand had opened a hospital. It attracted patients from far and wide, and Mukund examined each one of them and prescribed effective medicines, so much so they paid him whatever fees he charged. Within six months, he amassed a hundred thousand coins.

Meanwhile, Mukund's friend Jayant, back in his village Sankaragiri, was not as lucky as his classmate. People there did not have any faith in the vaidyas of the place. So, for any and every illness, they went to a sorcerer who would chant some incantation and hand over a white powder after blowing into the packet and a small bottle containing some liquid.

Strangely, some of the patients got cured and that was enough to convince the people that he was capable for curing their ailments. And they also gave him whatever he would ask for. The sorcerer, Manideva, thus made good use of their blind faith in him to make money.

One day a little boy, Gopal, of Sankaragiri, fell seriously ill. He had high fever. The boy and his parents lived in Jayant's neighbourhood, and he offered to cure the boy of his fever. However, the parents rushed him to Manideva. He resorted to chanting of some *mantra* into Gopal's ears; he took a tumbler of water, blew into it thrice, and then sprinkled it all over the boy—all of no avail. The fever did not subside; in fact, it even showed signs of rising. The boy fell into a swoon.

When Jayant heard of the boy's grave condition, he went to Manideva and almost shouted at him: "What have you done with the boy? You saw him shivering with fever and yet thought that you could bring it down by chanting mantras! Two precious days have been lost—two days when the boy could have been saved from the jaws of death! I had all along known that your mantras would have no effect on him or his fever. Have your mantras ever cured anyone of his illness? Come on, out with the truth!"

Manideva felt ashamed of him-

self. "Brother," he confessed, "you've learnt medicine and you know all about fever and what medicines will cure it. Somehow, the people here don't have any faith in medicines; they would rather take refuge in mantras. That's why they all come to me, and they have firm belief that my mantras are capable of curing their diseases. I don't wish to tamper with their belief and therefore, I chant some mantras and give them sacred water. Really I am not competent enough to treat patients of their diseases, and I feel sorry for them. But I cannot help it. I don't want them to go away disappointed."

"Now I realise that you mean well, Manideva," said Jayant, "and that you don't like cheating your patients. It's true that we can't remove their superstitions and wean them away from their blind faith, overnight. You're doing your best in giving mental comfort and satisfaction to your patients, though you can't really cure them of their illnesses. Whereas I've learnt medicine and I can cure diseases. So, let's join together and give them better comfort and greater relief from their suffering. I will not disclose who my guru is and from where I learnt medicine. Let the people come to you. We both shall examine them by turns and when you give them sacred water, I shall put some medicine in it. And whatever they give by way of fees, we shall divide it be-



tween ourselves. I am sure we both can be happy."

"Oh! How kind-hearted you are!" said Manideva in a very humble tone. "I agree to your proposal. We shall together treat the patients. I shall not tell anyone that you are a disciple of guru Sadanand. You can prescribe the medicines, which will be given along with the sacred water, and we shall equally divide the income between ourselves."

From the next day, Manideva occupied one corner of Jayant's hall and received the patients. He would ask them about their ailments and Jayant would listen to them and give them medicines which they would take immediately and gulp it down along



with the sacred water which Manideva gave them before they placed their fees in front of Manideva and went back happy and satisfied.

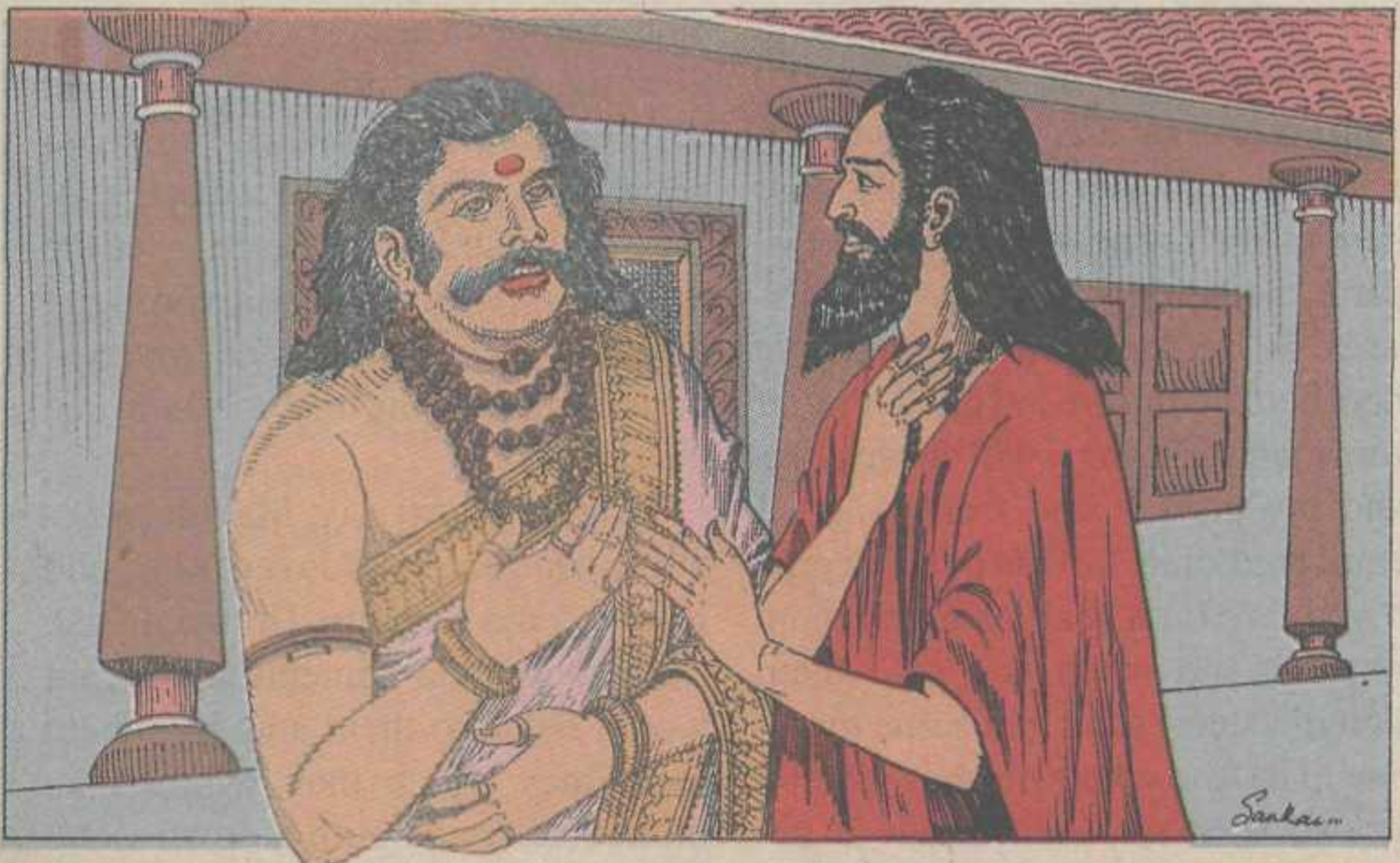
They both now amassed wealth. Jayant had more than what Sadanand had asked him by way of his gurudakshina. However, the thought that he had to pay dakshina to his guru did not bother him. Because if he were to pay gurudakshina, then everybody would come to know who his guru was. People in Sankaragiri did not know that he had learnt medicine and that he was a qualified vaidya.

Soon a year passed by. Guru Sadanand started from his ashram to meet his disciples, Mukund and Jayant. Sankaragiri was on the way and so he went in search of Jayant first. Whoever he asked about Jayant

said there was no vaidya in that place by that name. "There is a sorcerer called Jayant. He and another sorcerer named Manideva meet patients and with the help of mantras and some medicines, they treat them. People do get cured, but they have to pay a heavy fee," added one passer-by. He, however, showed the way to Jayant's house.

When Jayant saw his guru approaching, he went and hid in a room and told his family to say that he had gone out and they did not know when he would return. Sadanand smiled on hearing their excuse and went away.

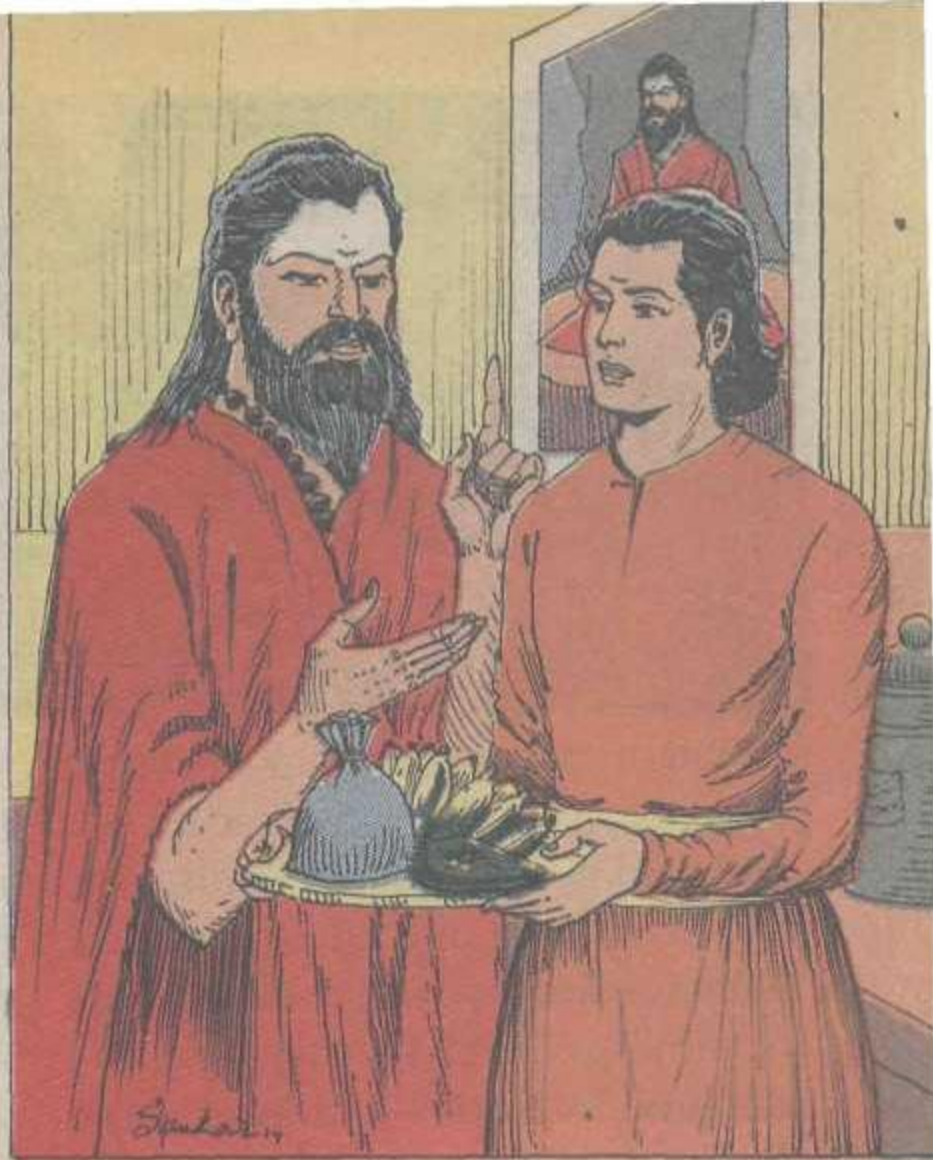
He then proceeded to Sivagiri. The first passer-by he met had a lot to tell him about vaidya Mukund. "There, that's his house!" he said, pointing at a three storeyed mansion.



When Mukund saw his guru opening the gate and coming in, he rushed to the portico to receive him. He prostrated before him. "Please come in, O revered guru! I was looking forward to your visit. I've been keeping the gurudakshina for the past six months. Please accept it and shower your blessings on me !"

Sadanand, however, did not accept the bag of coins that Mukund extended to him. "Mukund, if a vaidya has acquired ten thousand coins within a short period like six months, it only means that he has been fleecing his patients. That kind of money I shall not accept. The primary duty of a vaidya is to treat his patients, cure them of their ailments, and give them comfort. I don't think you've realised this prime obligation to your patients, to your profession, or to your guru. After you and Jayant left my ashram, I've been hearing about your activities and progress. You had become greedy, forgetting your duty. No, I won't accept any dakshina from you. At least henceforth, make all efforts to give your patients relief from physical pain and refrain from giving them any mental agony." Sadanand then returned to his ashram.

The vampire concluded the narration with that and turned to Vikramaditya. "O King ! Sadanand never took any gurudakshina from any of his disciples. Why then did he tell Mukund and Jayant that he would



accept ten thousand coins from each of them after one year? Was it fair on his part to have discriminated two of his disciples ? It's certain that no vaidya can earn that much money even in one year through fair means or practice. Why, then, did he demand ten thousand coins from each of them when he visited them after one year? There must have been some reasons which prompted Sadanand to do so. If you know those reasons and yet decide not to answer me, should I remind you of what would happen to you ? Your head will be blown to pieces. Remember that !"

The king was ready with his answer. "If one analyses human character, one can come across all sorts of





peculiarities. Mukund wanted to treat patients, but at the same time he was bothered by his promise to his guru. So, he entered into an arrangement with another vaidya for the purpose of earning enough to meet the guru's demand. Both Mukund and Baidyanath concentrated on making money, forgetting their obligations to the suffering people. They charged hefty fees from them for treatment and medicines. Their action was against the obligations of vaidyas. Sadanand would not approve of such action and so refused to accept any dakshina from Mukund.

"The guru knew that Jayant, on the other hand, did not proclaim his training under Sadanand. Without disclosing who his guru was or from

which gurukul he got himself trained, he posed as a sorcerer but gave his patients medicines and not mantras, and treated them and gave them the relief they needed. He did not want the people to recognise his guru. It was a good intention on his part. That is why Sadanand did not wait to see him and accept dakshina from Jayant. He had demanded a huge sum as dakshina from both of them because he wanted to find out who among the two would be a true vaidya, and would truly serve the people."

The vampire realised that he had been outsmarted by the king. He flew back to the ancient tree carrying the corpse with him. Vikramaditya drew his sword and went after the vampire.

- A bad excuse is better than none
- A fool and his money are soon parted
- A friend to all is a friend to none.

News Flash

Schooling at 100 years

Ana Molina Osorio could not finish high school when she was 16 years old. Her Puerto Rican parents decided that education could wait, but money was more important. She then began selling cinema tickets. But 86 years later and now 102 years old, Mrs. Osorio graduated from high school late last year. She took her diploma along with 19 other "graduates" much younger than she. Her only regret is that none of her own children was as fortunate as she.

More literates in India

Taking India as a whole, the percentage of literacy is below 50, though States like Kerala and West Bengal can boast a higher percentage, say, 90 plus. However, it may interest you to know—thanks to a professor in Jawaharlal Nehru University in Delhi—that India has the largest number of literates in the world! They number 590,000,000, which is greater than the total number of literates in the U.S.A., Europe, and Russia, according to some statistics presented by Dr. Shakhder at a workshop held recently in the capital. When India became independent fifty years ago, 97 per cent of the women in the country were illiterate. Today, more of them are literate compared to the number of literate women in the U.S.A. and Russia. Since 1947, new universities have been established at the rate of three per year. Some of the universities in India cater to more than 300,000 students each. The doctorates conferred by the universities number 20 per day. Be that as it may, we have to double our efforts to raise the literacy level further.

Hottest year

The year 1997 saw the average temperature in the world rising by 0.43 degree Celsius over that of the previous year. In 1995, it had registered a record rise of 0.38 degree Celsius. It was only in 1860 that temperature records began to be maintained. The global temperature is estimated to rise by 3 degrees Celsius in the course of the next hundred years.

More pyramids opened

Mention Egypt and one thinks of the Great Pyramids there, which are among the famous seven wonders of the ancient world. The pyramids are huge structures having a square base with the four sides sloping upwards to a common apex. They contain the royal tombs of the Pharaohs—Khufu, Cheops, and Mykerinos. Though believed to have been built some 5,000 years ago, the bodies of the rulers—mummies—in the tombs have remained well preserved. These three pyramids in the Giza plateau have been a tourist attraction for several years now. In December, three more pyramids were *for the first time* thrown open to the public. They contain the tombs of the two wives of Pharaoh Cheops and his mother, who was a queen. They were discovered in 1930, and work on their restoration was taken up a few years later. They are 20 metres (66 feet) high. Four more smaller pyramids—also discovered in the Thirties—containing tombs of high officials, are now undergo-

ing restoration for an early opening to the public.

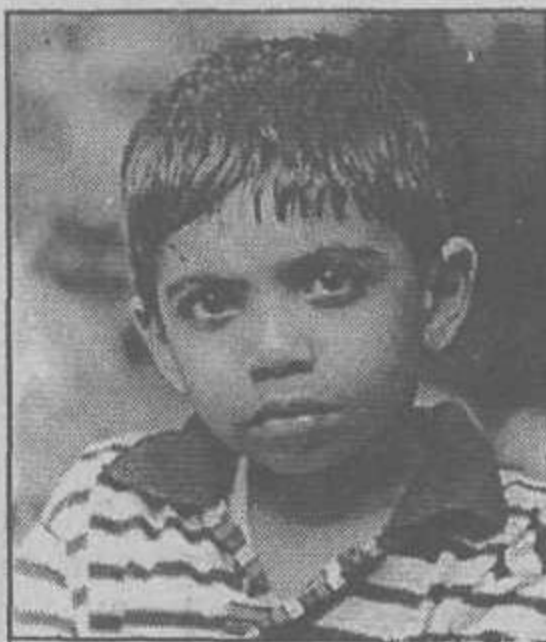
Space as backdrop for a movie

First, the story in a nutshell: The world is threatened by an imminent catastrophe, but none on earth is aware of it—except a scientist. And he flees to the security of space. The space watchers in the U.S.A. and Russia are angry with him for not having taken them into confidence. They conspire and send a beautiful TV artiste to kill him. She goes into space, only to fall in love with him. No, they do not live happily ever after—like the ending of most fairy tales. A famous Russian movie director does

not divulge how the story will end, but the entire venture is going to be full of surprises and suspense because he wants the movie to be filmed in space! Many aspiring actors and actresses are reported to have approached him for roles in the film. Whoever is selected will have to undergo rigorous training, including spacewalk for hours together. The space travellers in the Mir space station will be in charge of the technical requirements of movie-making. That is, if the director ever gets the green signal from the space authorities in the two countries. The project may not come off so soon.

Uncanny memory

How much can one remember? Five-year-old Varun seems to be an exception. He can reel out the names of the Indian States and Union Territories, their area and size of the population. Well, that is only some 30 odd names, you may say. But ask him to mention the names of *all* the districts in Kerala, and



all the districts in Arunachal Pradesh. Before you can think of other States, he would have mentioned the names of all the districts. How about the currencies of some 165 countries of the world? That is no problem for him. He knows all of them. He can also identify the flags of those countries. What is the capital of Ivory Coast? He will have the answer at his finger-tip. What is the significance of October 13? He will

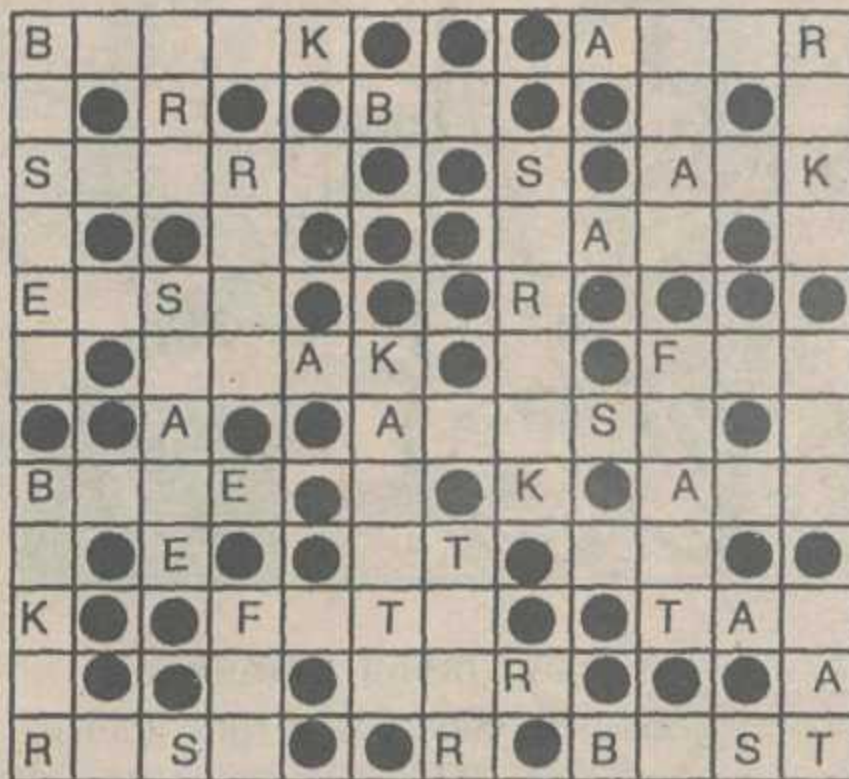
say in a trice: U.N. International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction! Did you know that? Well, this First Standard boy knows much more than that—names of universities, world organisations, sports organisations, why, even the symbols and logos of many many institutions. Varun is the son

of Vijayan, a teacher in a school in Kerala where the boy studies, and Ajitha. When he was less than two years, he had exhibited signs of his uncanny memory. His parents then encouraged him to acquire such type of general knowledge. Varun's hobby is to read Quiz and information books. He has also collected toys and games from different countries; many of them came as gifts.

A MERICAN PUZZLE

-P.S.Kumar

Find 33 words from the single word
'BREAKFAST'



Clues

- 2 letter words - 3
- 3 letter words - 10
- 4 letter words - 11
- 5 letter words - 6
- 6 letter words - 3

Total words - 33

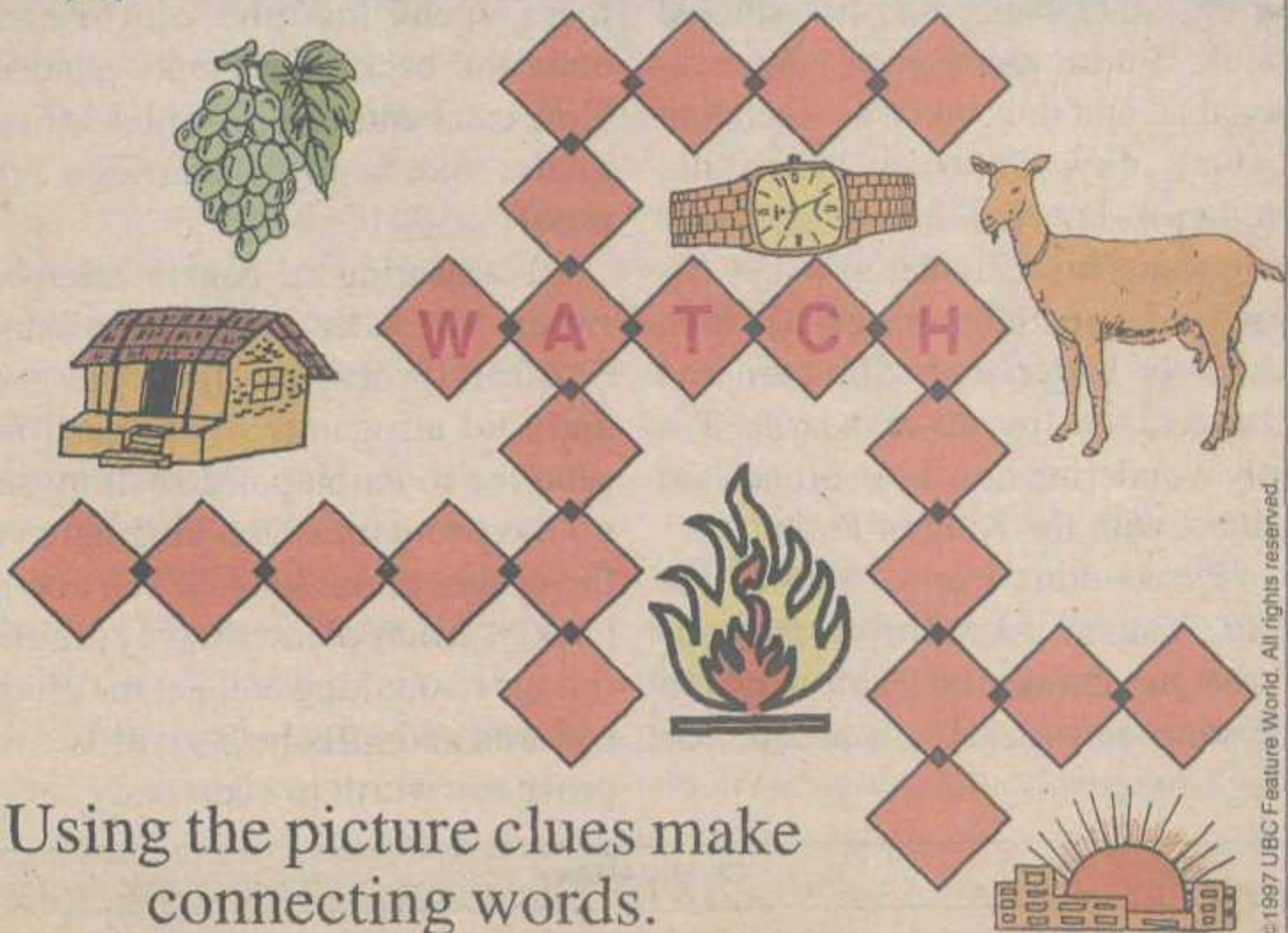
Solution



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CROSS WORD

-P.Ramu



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When Fortune Smiled



Sadashiv Sastri was the royal *purohit* in Shivpuri. He was a learned person, well-versed in the ancient scripts. His brother-in-law, Shankar Sastri, who stayed with him, on the other hand, had not studied much. But he was a good conversationalist, and thus taken as a scholar.

One day, Shankar heard his brother-in-law tell his sister: "Our king wants his daughter to marry the prince of the neighbouring Parbatpur, which is larger than Shivpuri and stronger, too, by all standards. I'm only wondering how I can broach the subject with the King of Parbatpur."

"Please don't worry," replied his wife. "You can ask my brother to go to Parbatpur. I'm sure he'll be able to talk to the king and make him accept our king's proposal."

"You mean Shankar?" said Sadashiv Sastri, who took his wife to be naive. "He may be your brother, but he's good-for-nothing. What does he know, except to wander here and there, spend his time with friends, and come back home empty-handed? How can I entrust him with a serious matter like a royal marriage proposal?"

Overhearing the conversation between his sister and her husband, Shankar rushed into their presence and said arrogantly: "You need not send me to Parbatpur. I shall myself go there and make the king agree to the wishes of our king. When I come back, you may please convey the glad tidings to our king and get me all the rewards and gifts he'll give! Let me prove my worth to everybody."



Shankar Sastri did not as much wait to get a nod from his brother-in-law. He started immediately for Parbatpur. At the border between Shivpuri and Parbatpur, there was a dense forest. In those days nobody dared cross the forest, which was fearsome. People believed that it was the home of several demons who would be just waiting to pounce on whosoever came their way. Those who really wanted to cross over to Parbatpur would, therefore, take a circuitous route to avoid the demon-infested forest.

As Shankar was young and he was in a haste to reach Parbatpur, he decided to take the short-cut through the forest. He walked for a long distance and on feeling tired, he thought he would take a rest for a while. He saw a pond where he washed his feet and face, drank some water, and lay beneath a nearby banyan tree. He was about to fall asleep when he heard an earth-shattering noise. He stood up and looked all around to find what noise it was, who made it, and where it came from.

Before long, there stood in front of him a huge demoness. She prodded him with her little finger which was as long as his arm. "Who are you?" she asked in a thunderous voice.

By then Shankar had begun to tremble like the leaves of the banyan tree. "My name is Shankar Sastri," he managed to mumble.



"Why did you come here?" asked the demoness, without taking her eyes off Shankar. "Don't you know that this forest is our abode?"

By now Shankar had found his wits. "I'm an astrologer," he said without batting an eyelid. "I knew that I would today fall a prey to a demoness. It's my fate. However, before my end comes, I might be of some use to you."

"I see, so you're an astrologer, eh?" Shankar thought her voice was now slightly mellow. "If that is so, tell me when my daughter will get married." She then clapped her hands which brought another demoness — looking smaller and younger — to their presence. "She's my daughter.



Her name is Vanarani. She has several suitors among the demons here, but I want her to marry Gajamukha."

"That's good!" Shankar blurted out.

"What makes you say that?" queried the demoness, not quite satisfied.

"Oh! That's because the two names have four syllables each. Va-na-ra-ni, Ga-ja-mu-kha!" Shankar spelt out the names slowly. "She's a beautiful girl; and I find that Gajamukha lives five hills away. Am I right?" He did not wait for an answer. "Take it from me, their marriage will take place in the next five days."

"You're very correct," said the mother demoness. "He lives five hills away. You must go there, seek him out in his cave, talk to him and make him agree to this marriage. If that happens, then I shall give you two

bagsful of gold. But, let me warn you. He's a short-tempered fellow. He won't have patience to listen to you. Before you utter two words, he would pounce on you. But you must manage to escape and come here after making him accept the proposal."

"Don't worry", said Shankar heaving a heavy sigh of relief. "You've entrusted the job to me. Take it that it is done. I shall myself make all arrangements for the wedding. After all, what you've given me is a challenging assignment. I shall execute it to the best of my ability and claim my reward from you." Shankar asked for the direction to reach the cave of Gajamukha and took leave of the mother and daughter demonesses.

Shankar had no difficulty in finding the cave of Gajamukha. At the



mouth of the cave lay a heap of bones and skeletons. Chanting the name of God, Shankar entered the cave. The demon was sound asleep. Shankar said in a loud voice: "Gajamukha ! Get up! Shankar Sastri has come to meet you. Please accept his greetings!"

Gajamukha sat up wiping his eyes. "You've dared to wake me up! Whoever you are, you've my greetings, too. Nobody would even dare to come anywhere near me. The very mention of my name makes them tremble. But you're courageous enough to enter my cave, and even stand in front of me and call me by my name and wake me up. You're really brave. I would like to reward you."

"I'm grateful to you for your words of praise," said Shankar smilingly. "I've come here to do you some good. Therefore, I'm confident that you won't harm me."

"You seem to be quite clever in your talk," remarked Gajamukha. "Did you say that you wish to do some good to me ? What's it?"

"Everything is for your good," said Shankar. "I've just seen a suitable bride for you, Gajamukha!"

"A bride for me?" the demon could not believe his ears. "Who's she ? When is the marriage?"

"Her name is Vanarani," Shankar satiated the curiosity in Gajamukha. "You must have heard her name, haven't you? She'll really make a *vana*

rani, queen of the forest."

"Of course, I've heard that name," said Gajamukha. "I also know that she has many suitors, and that they all vie with each other to wed her. Tell me, is she that beautiful ?"

"There is no doubt about it," said Shankar, "in fact she's a match to any nymph from Devaloka. I want to arrange your marriage with her. You both will make an ideal pair."

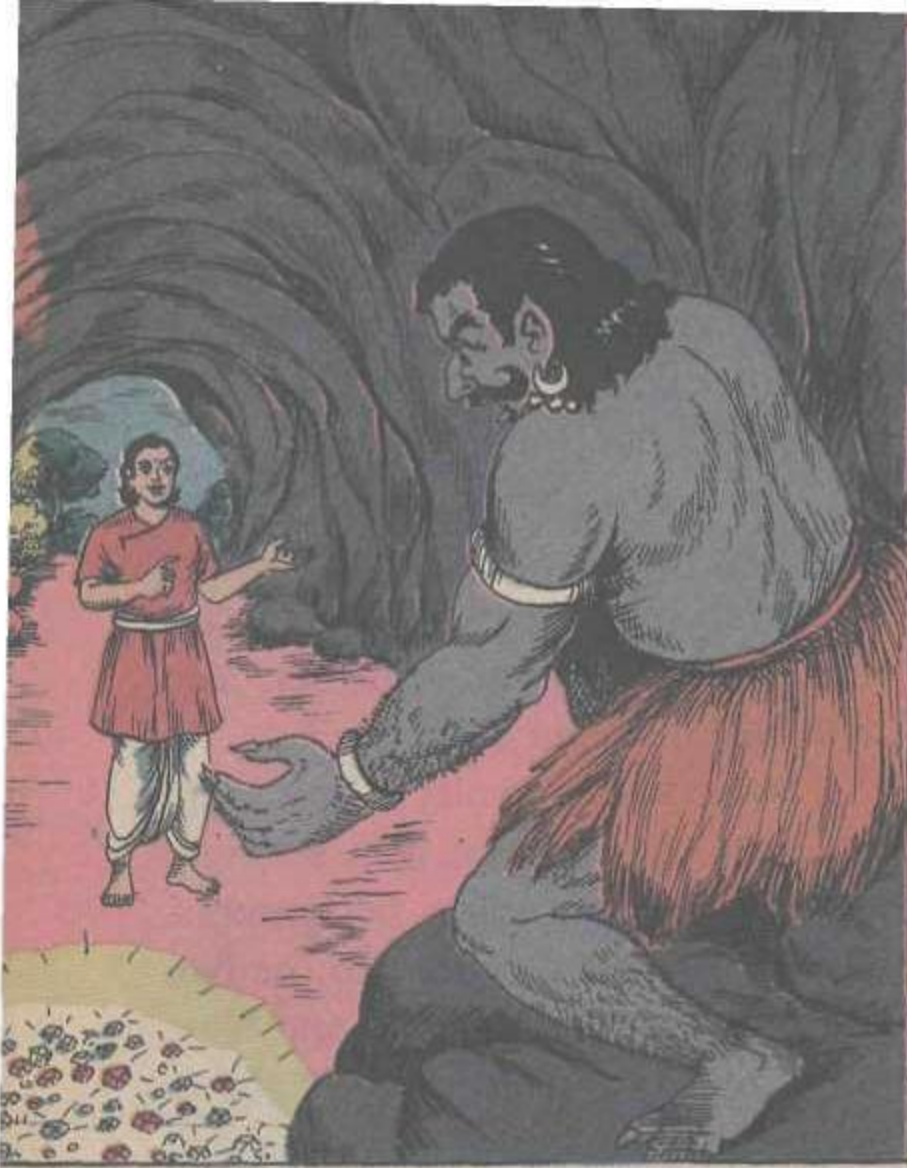
"Is that so? I'm really happy," said Gajamukha. "Come on, let's start right away. We shall call on her parents, and I'll also get a chance to see her. I've only heard about her, and have never met her. If as you say she is beautiful, I would like the marriage to take place immediately. I shall take the bag of ornaments I have collected. Whatever she chooses, let her keep them, and the rest will be your reward."

Without wasting any time, they both started for the place where Shankar had seen the demoness and her daughter. Gajamukha carried the bag of jewels on one shoulder and he gladly raised Shankar on to his other shoulder.

As they approached, Vanarani happened to see them. She ran to her mother and said, "Mother, it's better that Gajamukha sees me at night. Only then will he be able to appreciate my beauty. Let him not see me now!"

"You keep quiet, Rani," said her





mother. "Who said the demon would want to see anybody in broad daylight? It's the tradition for demons and demonesses to meet only in the night. They are not supposed to come out in the open during the day. That Sastri would remember all these. Don't worry!"

Just as the mother demoness had predicted, Shankar led Gajamukha to her only when it became dark. He saw Vanarani and commented on her beauty: "True, she's like a nymph. I haven't come across such beauty among the demonesses I know of. Let's decide about the date of the marriage rightaway."

Fortunately for him, Vanarani, too, approved of Gajamukha and ac-

cepted his proposal. Their wedding took place without much delay and according to the custom followed by demons and demonesses. Soon after the ceremonies, including some dances, it was time for Shankar Sastri to leave their presence. "I've fulfilled my mission. Now, I would accept the two bagsful of gold from Vanarani's mother and the jewels which Gajamukha has promised. I shall then depart for my village, equally happy and contented."

"You appear to be quite methodical and prompt, Shankar Sastri!" observed Gajamukha. "You know how to achieve things through your glib talk. Wherever you go, you won't find it a problem to turn a difficult situation in your favour."

The demoness and Gajamukha were only too happy to hand over rewards and gifts to Shankar Sastri. He took leave of them as well as Vanarani and left the place, carrying the bags on his shoulder. Before he left the place, however, he sounded a note of warning: "Let me warn you in good time. The two kingdoms on either side of this forest are advancing with their soldiers. They have an eye on the forest and want to capture it so that they can extend their respective areas. Therefore, it would be better if you all move out of this forest and go and live somewhere else."

"I shall lead an army of demons and resist their attack," said

Gajamukha. "They won't be able to defeat the demon army!"

"You've rewarded me generously and I'm indeed grateful to you," said Shankar. "I was only trying to express my gratitude by warning you of imminent danger. But if you are confident of successfully defending yourself, I will only wish you the best of luck."

After Shankar Sastri went away, Gajamukha contemplated on the warning given to them. He had just started a family life and it would be unwise to entangle himself in a fight with mighty armies. So, he accepted Shankar Sashtri's advice and left for another forest taking along with him Vanarani and her mother.

Shankar was greeted by his sister and her husband Sadashiv Sastri. When they saw the smile on his face, they thought he would have succeeded in meeting the King of Parbatpur and making him accept the proposal from the King of

Shivpuri. When Sadashiv Sastri queried about his visit, Shankar did not at first disclose where he had gone and where he did not go. He showed them the gold and the jewellery he had brought with him. That was enough and more for the threesome to lead a luxurious life for years together. They could not believe their eyes, and would not dare ask him from where he got them.

"You people had taken me for a good-for-nothing fellow, didn't you?" Shankar asked his sister and brother-in-law. "That alone had provoked me to leave home. I had no intention of going to Parbatpur and meeting the king there. I wanted to find out whether I was capable of earning a livelihood and making money. I now have faith in my own capability." He then told them of his adventures in the forest.

Sadashiv listened to Shankar's long narration. "Yes, Shankar, fortune has at last smiled on you!"



Some hollow exaggeration

★ *A friend of reader Jyotiranjana Biswal of Durgapur performed his daughter's wedding. The bridegroom was from the army. Days later, when he met his friend, he heard the complaint: "He gave her a snow job on his army career." Reader Biswal wants to know what that expression means.*

The friend was referring to the attempt made by the bridegroom or his family to persuade the bride's people to believe that he had some acts of valour to his credit, when nothing like that had really taken place. They were only indulging in some exaggeration. An attempt to deceive a person as to the merits of someone or something is described as snow job.

★ *Reader Papu of Talcher wants to know the meaning of a "goodman's croft."*

The word 'croft' comes from Scotland, where even a small piece of land owned by a family is put to good use, like raising a kitchen garden, which would provide them with not only food but sometimes an income, too. In olden days, sometimes the family would stop cultivating the land to avert the malice of the devil from the crop. Then the piece of land would be called a "goodman's croft."

★ *What is meant by 'alpha and beta?' asks Tarun Patnaik of Jeypore. He says he has heard of 'Alpha and Omega' to mean the beginning and end of an aspect.*

In the Greek alphabet, alpha is the first letter, and omega the 24th and last, whereas beta is the second letter. Figuratively, it stands for one belonging to the second grade—a grade below alpha. In astronomy, beta refers to a star second in brightness.

ORIGIN OF 'MARATHON'

In 490 B.C., a war took place between Greece and Persia (now Iran) at a place called Marathon. A messenger named Pheidippides was sent by the Greeks to Sparta to solicit the help of that city state. He actually ran the distance from Athens to Sparta. The Greeks defeated the Persians at Marathon and Pheidippides was entrusted to take the good news to Athens. Once again, he ran the entire distance between Marathon and Athens (about 23 miles). However, even while announcing the good news, he fell down dead due to exhaustion. In the modern Olympic Games, a long distance running race called Marathon was introduced in 1896; the name was chosen to commemorate the feat of that ancient Greek runner. In 1924, the distance for the Marathon race was standardised as 26 miles 385 yards (42.95 km).

(Contributed by R. Gopalakrishnan)

Sports Snippets

The mother flame

Every time the Olympic Games is held, the torch is lit at Olympia, in Greece, where the ancient Games were held. In a solemn ceremony, two young women—one holding the torch and the other a magnifying lens—light the torch by focusing the sun's rays on the torch, which then starts on its journey to the country and the city chosen for the Games. En route, several thousands of torches would be lit from the original flame brought from Olympia, and one of them reaches the actual venue in time to lit the cauldron erected at the site and mark the start of the Games. A similar exercise takes place when the Asian Games is held once in four years. The next—13th—Asian Games is scheduled to take place this year at Bangkok, capital of Thailand. The flame will be lit in Delhi where the Asian Games flame has now a permanent site. Delhi was chosen the site for the permanent flame because it was there that the Asian Games was born, in 1951. The venue was the present National Stadium. On December 14 last, the Crown Prince of Kuwait, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Fahad Al-Sabah, who is the President of the Olympic Council of Asia, lit the flame at the National Stadium at a colourful ceremony at which Prime Minister I.K. Gujral was the Guest of Honour. The flame was first lit at the foyer and then taken round the stadium by nearly 65 sports personalities, including three veterans of the 1951 Asian Games—Mewa Lal

(footballer), Dr. Karan Singh (relay), and Eswar Rao (weightlifter), who handed it over to the Kuwaiti Prince for lighting the cauldron erected at the National Stadium where it will burn permanently. The Asian Games torch will henceforth be lit from this 'mother' flame and taken to the venue of the Games. Incidentally, the 9th Asian Games was held in 1982 in Delhi, which will host the 15th Games in the year 2006.

World title for Indian

That, too, for a girl just turning 10. She is Koneru Humpy of Vijayawada, who won the Gold Medal in the World Under-10 Girls Chess Championship which concluded at Palm Beach in Cannes, France, on December 18. She and Nana Dzagnidze of Georgia tied with 9.5 points. But by virtue of a higher progressive tie-break score, Humpy was chosen the champion. She is the third Indian to win a world title in chess. Ten years ago, Viswanathan Anand won the World Junior Championship at Baguio, Philippines. In 1996, P. Harikrishna won the World Under-10 Boys Championship at Menorca, Spain. At Cannes, Humpy was the only player to win all the games. She won the National Championship first in 1995. In December 1996, she won the



National Under-9 in Mumbai (Bombay) and qualified to represent India at Cannes. She studies in the Sixth Standard.

'Marathon' Couple

History was created when Echchadli My Tahar of Belgium and his wife Akrachi Zahra won the first places in the men's and women's categories in the Pune international marathon on December 21. He covered the distance of 42 km in 2 hrs 25 min 36 seconds. Akrachi won the half marathon (21 km) in 1hr 16 min. 13 seconds.

"Queen" Helen

Time was when men considered tennis to be their monopoly. Women began



playing professional tennis in the 1920s. One of the first stars was Helen Moody of the U.S.A. She started playing when she was 14 in 1920. The next year she won two girls national titles. In 1923, when she was 17, she won the U.S. Women's Championship—the youngest champion at that time. She went on to win 31 major titles between then and 1938 when she retired, after winning that year's Wimbledon for the eighth time. She captured the U.S. crown seven times and four French Championships. She won Grand Slam titles 19 times. The first time a male player won a Grand Slam title was in 1938—the year "Queen Helen"—as she was nicknamed—retired. And he was

Don Budge, also of the U.S.A. Helen Moody died on New Year's Day. In an interview to a newspaper in 1984, she attributed her success to "watching the seniors play" and added: "Children are great imitators." On hearing of her demise, Budge said, "She was my idol."

300 wickets

Shane Warne of Australia is the latest to join the 300-wicket "club". On January 4, when he took the wicket of Jacques Kallis during South Africa's second innings in the second Test in Sydney, he reached that mark and became the 13th member in the exclusive group, which is headed by India's Kapil Dev, whose 434 wickets from 131 Tests is a world record. A similarity between the two is that Kapil was 28 years and one day when he claimed the 300th wicket; Shane Warne was 28 years 114 days when he reached the same milestone. He is the fourth "fastest" to the mark—63rd Test, behind Dennis Lillee (56 Tests), and Malcolm Marshall of West Indies and Richard Hadlee of New Zealand (61 matches each). The others in the club are Richard Hadlee-431 wickets, Ian Botham (England)-383, Malcolm Marshall-376, Imran Khan (Pakistan)-362, Dennis Lillee-355, Courtney Walsh (West Indies)-353, Wasim Akram (Pakistan)-334, Bob Willis (England)-325, Lance Gibbs (W. Indies)-309, Curtley Ambrose (W. Indies)-309, and Fred Trueman (England)-307.



Gem and diamond are not pearls!

Veereswarpuri was a haven for poets, because they were treated with great respect in that kingdom. They used to take their compositions to the poet laureate Kaladhar, who would go through them and recommend the poets for royal rewards and awards.

One day, poet Ramdas visited Kaladhar and handed him two of his latest creations. The poet laureate took the first one. It was titled "A gem for grandma". Kaladhar read it once, silently; he then read it a second time, now loudly, pausing at every word, every line, and raising his head as if he was asking Ramdas: "You call this poetry?" He shook his head and gave it back to him.

Ramdas then pushed his second poem into Kaladhar's hands. The title was "A diamond tiara for Devayani". The laureate read aloud the title and did not proceed any further. "I don't have to read it fully," he remarked, "now that I have read your one poem, I can very well imagine what you would have written in the second poem." He did not say anything more.

Ramdas understood his silence. "Sir, I shall bring to you better ones." He took leave of the poet laureate and went his way.





❑ ***How is 'dubbing' of one language into another done in films? I am surprised when I see actors and actresses in foreign films speaking an Indian language with correct accent and pronunciation. How do they achieve accurate lip movements?***

- R.L. Bhandari, Hyderabad

Dubbing is a highly technical exercise and at the same time a tricky affair. One must remember that the syntax or grammatical structure of sentences (in English, the order is subject, predicate, object—for example: *Rama played football*) is not the same in every language. Therefore, dubbing cannot and will not be cent per cent accurate. The person who does the conversion from one language to another will be well-versed in both languages capable of choosing words that will more or less suit the lip movements, taking care to confine the sentence, phrase, or expression to the actual time taken in the original language. In close-up shots, variations if any in the lip movements are easily discernible. The person who does the dubbing and the person who lends the voice are invariably different.

❑ ***Is there a tree, all parts of which are considered useful?***

- Rupesh M. Shinde, Nipani

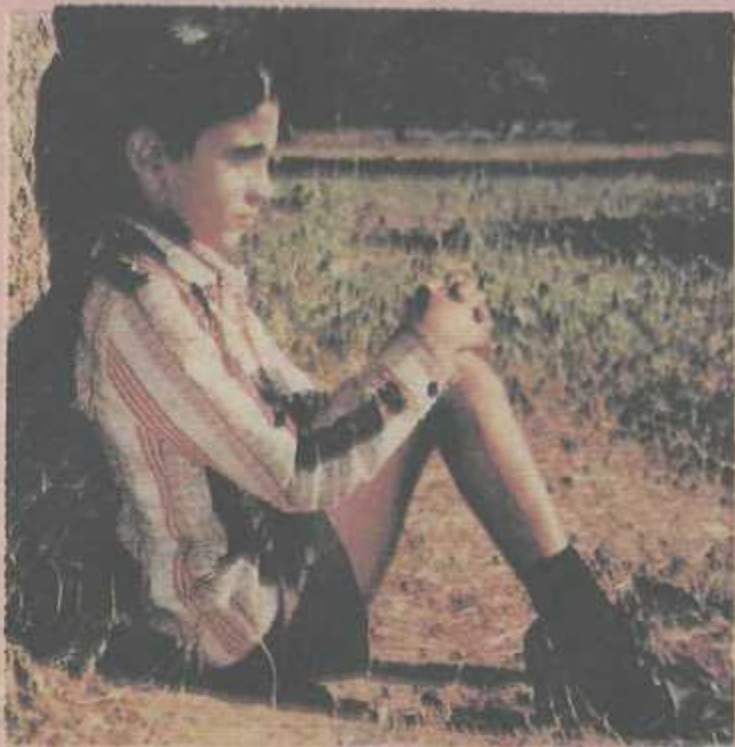
Every part of the coconut is generally put to some use or the other. The nut provides a sweet drink; the kernel is edible and is widely used while cooking dishes; and the shell is a good medium for making attractive handicraft. The outer husk is used in making coir rope and in furniture upholstery and mattresses. The flower is used as decoration during festivals and in wedding *pandals*. From the leaves, the long stem is taken out to make brooms. The leaves otherwise are used as roofing in thatched houses. The trunk is cut to pieces to make pillars for houses or sheds. All these are only some of the uses to which parts of the tree are put. There can be many more.

❑ ***What is meant by President's Rule?***

-Md. Ziaur-Rahman, Lilong, Manipur

Normally the governance of a State is in the hands of a Chief Minister and his or her Council of Ministers called the Cabinet. When the Chief Minister is no longer in a position to hold office, and when the Legislature cannot provide a suitable substitute, then the governance is taken over by the President of India. The President's Rule is carried out by the Governor, who represents the President of India in the State, and a team of Advisers.

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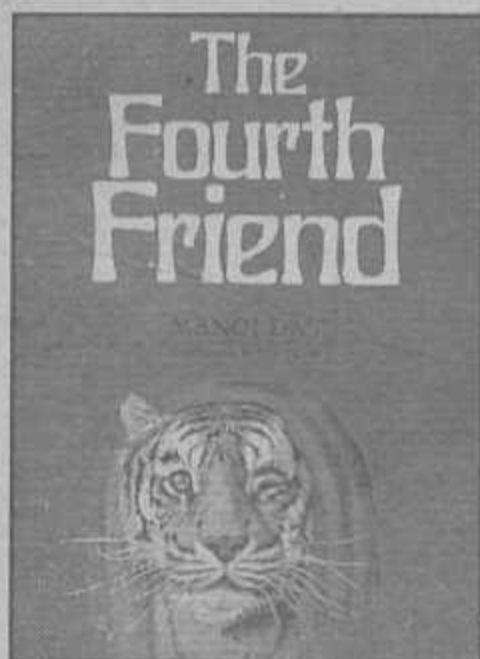
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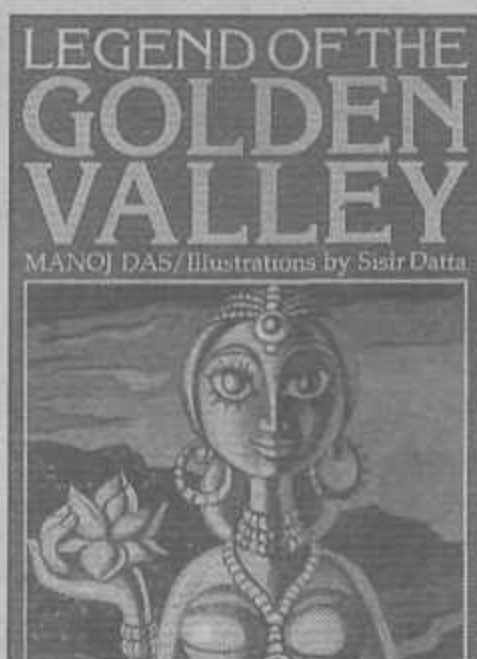
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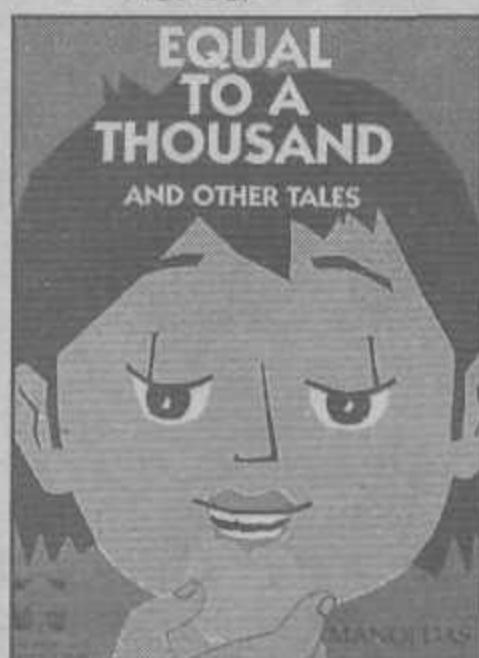
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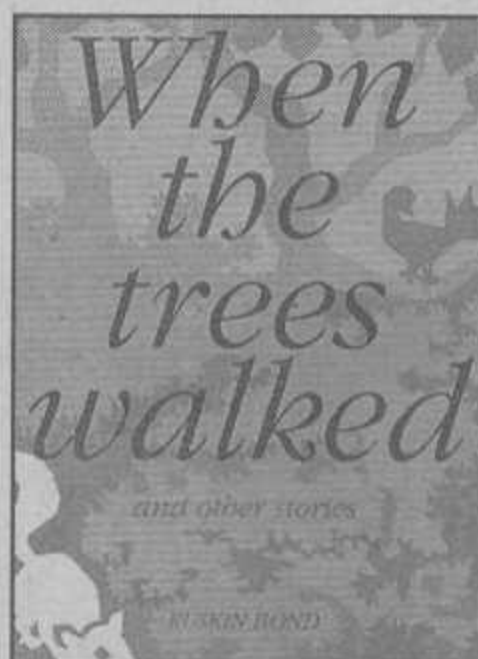


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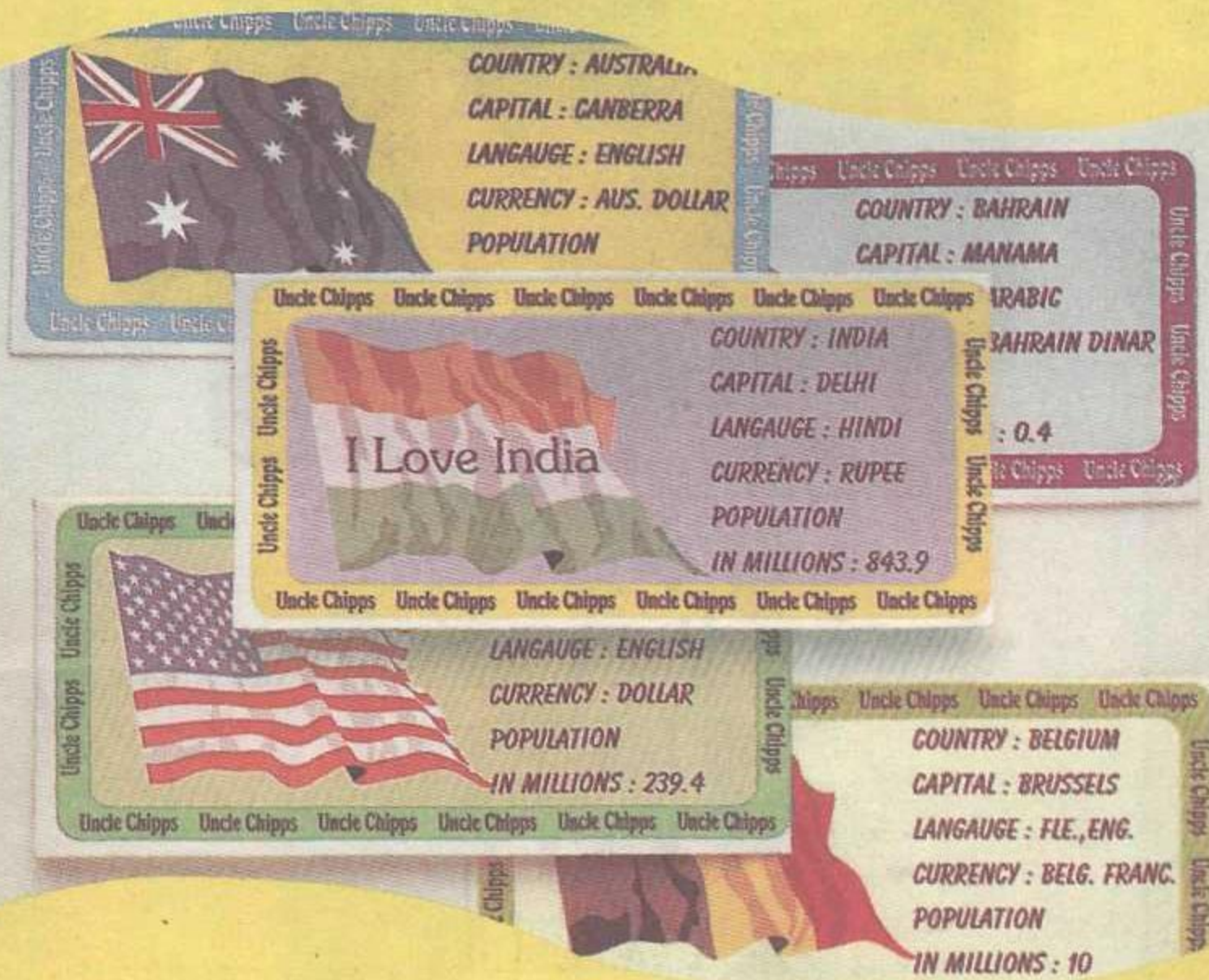


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